

‘COMMON’ CHAIRS FROM THE NORWICH CHAIR MAKERS’ PRICE BOOK OF 1801

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Cabinet and Chair Makers’ Price Books from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were the workshop manuals of their time, and as such, hold much detailed information for furniture historians. Price books should not be confused with the pattern books and drawing books produced by furniture designers in the eighteenth century, which were used by furniture makers as visual design references. The price books are a record of prices negotiated between employers and employees (master-men and journeymen) for specific woodworking tasks concerned in furniture making. The need for these documented agreements arose in the mid eighteenth century when a series of disputes concerning piece-work and day-work rates between furniture makers and their employers resulted in a strike of London cabinet makers in 1761. Around this time, and presumably as the need for organisation and solidarity between craftsmen became obvious, the Cabinet Makers’ Society was established in London’s West End, and in 1788, the Journeymen of London and Westminster, who claimed to be ‘desirous of shewing every possible degree of respect to their employers’, presented to the master cabinet makers a list of the various tasks undertaken in the production of furniture, and a proposed labour cost for each. This London edition of the price book, with amendments and supplements, was re-issued at regular intervals until 1866.

The Norwich Chair Makers’ Price Book of 1801 is one of a number of surviving price books from provincial towns and cities in England and Scotland, produced in the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first decade of the nineteenth century. The earliest surviving provincial book of prices was produced in Leeds in March 1791, followed two months later by a Nottingham edition, and subsequently by price books in Norwich, 1801, Bolton 1802, Preston 1802, Birmingham 1803, Edinburgh 1805, Liverpool 1805, Glasgow 1806, Manchester 1810, and Whitehaven in 1810. It is interesting to note that there are no known price books for centres south of Birmingham, apart from London. Given that there were flourishing cabinet making centres in Bristol, Exeter, and Plymouth, for example, in the early nineteenth century, it is a matter of conjecture whether price books for these and other centres existed, or whether the Journeymen Cabinet Makers did not organise themselves into cohesive groups outside the documented centres.

Some of the surviving price books include rates for many designs of seating furniture, as well as cabinet furniture. The Norwich Price Book of 1801 is unique in that it contains a seventy-six page, separately paginated, book of prices for chairs, settees, and stools which has been bound, presumably for convenience of use, with the book of cabinet furniture prices. This rare text, of which only two copies are known, is a second edition, printed in Norwich by J. Payne, but to date, no first edition has been located. The seventy pages of seating furniture prices include descriptions for 43 chairs, 6 sofas, 10 stools, and a ‘gouty’

INTRODUCTION.

1. Introduction to the
Norwich Chair Makers'
Price Book, 1801

AS a guide to the following prices, it will be necessary to notice, that Chairs, Sofas, &c. of all kinds, are flatted as plain as possible, that any pattern of back, top, &c. may be introduced in the same.

Articles that generally occur in the Chair are mentioned in the Extras of the same.

For a Wide-Top Chair for Painting or Staining, the most extras that are inserted may be found in page 11 ;—for a Narrow-Top Chair, in page 14 ;—for a Mahogany Wide-Top Chair, in page 18 ;—for a Vase-Back Chair, in page 33.

Forming Pannels in Tops, with Strings, &c. or Moulding ditto, to form the same, are inserted in Tables for that purpose ; Stumps, Elbows, and Moulding ditto, in pages 67, 68, 69.

It is impossible to insert every article that occurs, as the caprice of fashion so often varies ; especially in Fancy Chairs for Japanning : that if a proper inference cannot be drawn from this Book of Prices ; it is recommended, that the price be settled by Three Workmen, in the presence of the Master, or be paid for by the day.

Reducing Slabs, and working Old Stuff, to be paid for according to time.

Oiling, Polishing, and Staining of Chairs, to be paid for according to time.

Putting on Brads-Work Mouldings, the same.

Sawing out Stuff for Chairs, &c. if above an inch in thickness, to be paid for as the Table of Extras directs.

TABLE OF EXTRAS.

2. Table of Prices from the
Norwich Chair Makers' Price
Book

ALL fancy figures on outside or inside of banisters or splats,
not inserted in other extras, to be paid for according
to time; either in mahogany or other hard wood.

	£.	s.	d.
Round buttons between splats, prepared by the turners, or relieving splats, each	0	0	0½
Turned spindles, each spindle	0	0	1
Relieving bars of banisters or splats, each bar	0	0	0½
Mitres in reeds not inserted, each mitre	0	0	0½
Reeding back or front feet, when turned, or pillars, at per dozen reeds	0	0	9
Veneering sides of straight-seat rail, each side to form a rabbit	0	0	0½
Ditto sweep rails, each side	0	0	1
Commode front rail ditto	0	0	2
Veneering straight-seat rails, side and edge, for for caning or canvassing, each rail	0	0	1½
Ditto for sweep-seat rails, plain sweep, each rail	0	0	3
Commode front-rail ditto	0	0	4
Cutting the corners of chairs, to form a rabbit for caning or canvassing, each chair	0	0	1
SAWING chair, or sofa back feet, each foot	0	0	0½
Scrowl upper-end ditto, each	0	0	1½
Back feet, with a toe	0	0	1
Sweep-seat rails, plain sweep, each	0	0	0½
Commode ditto	0	0	1
Sawing a wide top	0	0	1
Sofa front rail, plain sweep, or elliptic	0	0	4
Cabriole sofa, back rail	0	0	4
Side rails for ditto, each	0	0	2
Corner pieces for cabriole sofa	0	0	4
Stretchers to ditto, each	0	0	0½
Scrowls for ditto, each	0	0	1½
Elbow and stump, each	0	0	0½
Sawing stuff, either mahogany or other wood, from inch and quarter to two inches, at per score feet	0	0	3
Ditto two inches and a half thick, at per score feet	0	0	4

cradle. The 43 chairs include 17 mahogany chairs, 4 stained or japanned chairs, 6 table chairs (children's high chairs), 7 'elm' chairs, 6 various side chairs, a cabriole (upholstered) chair, an easy chair, and a bed chair. There are no illustrations of the chairs.

The vernacular chair making tradition in East Anglia differs from other regions in England in that it was included in the trade description of 'Cabinet and Chair Maker', a term widely used for that area alone in nineteenth-century trade directories. This term is not used in any other regional furniture tradition where the two trades are described separately. This can be partly accounted for in the styles of early nineteenth century East Anglian 'common' chairs which, unlike other regional chairs, have few turned parts, and are constructed mainly using sawn parts, joined with cabinet made mortice and tenon joints. Within the Norwich Price Book, the only turned parts mentioned for the 'common' chairs are the turned 'buttons' and spindles, used in some chair backs, in the general table of extras, which are specifically referred to as being made by turners (Fig. 2).

The styles of 'common' chairs made in East Anglia were constrained by the use of sawn, seasoned timber which necessitated cabinet making jointing techniques, as well as the need for producing a durable, inexpensive chair in large numbers. Similar styles of cabinet made chairs have been attributed to other areas. 'Back stairs' chairs provenanced to late eighteenth-century Yorkshire have been recorded, and a cherrywood night chair with two rows of buttons in the back was sketched in a cabinet maker's note book in Chester in the mid 1820s. Hearsay evidence suggests that vernacular 'ball-back' chairs, similar to those made in East Anglia, but made in oak were also produced in Pembrokeshire in the second half of the nineteenth century. No doubt makers of these chairs referred, as did the East Anglian makers, to the pattern book of Chippendale, Sheraton, and Hepplewhite for some fashionable design features, which when interpreted locally, offered visual parallels between these geographically distanced areas of production. Although the East Anglian makers used designer names for some of their seating furniture, for example, 'Window stools' (p. 58) and 'Berger chair' (p. 41), they also used techniques and descriptive titles which link the chairs to their specific regional/vernacular origins; for example the terms 'nail seat', 'hollow seat', and the use of 'Elm' as a title rather than a material.

Field research in East Anglia (Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, and Essex) has resulted in the recording of a considerable number of vernacular chairs from the region, dating from the first half of the nineteenth century. Through systematic recording of these designs, certain stylistic features have come to be recognised as persistent characteristics of this region's chairs: for example, the thin wooden concave or 'hollow' seat, the ball or 'button' decoration in the back of some chairs, and the extensive use of elm as a primary wood.

The chairs illustrated here are attributed to East Anglian origin through family ownership or by their regional stylistic features. None can be firmly dated, but are assigned to the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and have been selected because they conform to the design possibilities listed in the price book and offer visual references to specific constructional conventions. The form which the chair descriptions in the Norwich Chair Makers' Price Book takes is consistent throughout the text. Each item of seating furniture is named, followed by a minimal description of the basic frame, and a price for making this. For example, Kitchen Chair II (Fig. 5) might be constructed to look like Diagram 1, which includes only the items contained in the basic description. There then follows a list of 'Extras' for each chair which could be added or substituted within the particular style, as

well as items from a further list of extras given at the front of the Price Book which might be applied to any of the designs (Fig. 2).

The system of pricing, although apparently comprehensive, seems particularly complex and clumsy in use. Diagram 2 shows in chart form, the general descriptions for thirteen chairs in the Price Book which might be described as 'common', in that they were intended to be made in unpainted and uncarved form, using native hardwoods. These are 8 'Elm chairs', 2 'Kitchen chairs', a 'Matted seat chair', and 2 children's 'Elm table chairs'. From this diagram, it is apparent that in terms of basic elements, Kitchen Chairs I and II differ only in that I has a banister and pedestal in the back design, while II has 'top and rails' and the back legs ('feet') are tapered above the seat. Similarly, the two 'Smoakers Chairs' are closely similar, as are the 'Square Back Elm Chair' and the 'Square Back Elm Chair with Wide Top'.

Apart from the 'Smoakers' chairs, the other nine 'common' full-size chairs are side chairs. The arms and arm supports, or 'Elbow and Stump', are listed in the table of extras at $\frac{3}{4}d.$ each to saw out; (whether this means $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ or $3d.$ per chair is not clear) and there are five separate descriptions for elbows at the end of the book; 'Elm stumps and elbows', 'French elbows', 'Mahogany stumps and elbows', 'Mahogany French elbows', and 'French elbows for japanning'. The 'Elm stumps and elbows', and 'French elbows' could be applied to any of the various 'common' side chair designs, to make compatible arm-chairs. This work cost one shilling and ninepence (9p) and two shillings and threepence (11p) per pair respectively, in the basic form. The Elm stumps and elbows, where 'the ends of the elbows project in front' (p. 66) could be supplied with one plain sweep, as in Figure 9b, or with turned stumps. The French elbows, 'straight on the sides, with turned outside stumps, or turned stumps and front feet in one' (p. 67) as in Figure 12, were the common if more costly alternative, showing close design affiliation with Regency high-style chairs of this period.

The arm chairs recorded in the East Anglian vernacular tradition are often only marginally larger than the side chairs, and of the same back height, typically 85–90 cm, giving the arm chairs the appearance of being somewhat stunted. Rarely, arm chairs have been recorded with extremely tall backs of 110–20 cm, and even more rarely, 'hollow' and 'nail seat' reclining chairs have been recorded (Fig. 12). This style of chair with 'hollow' or 'nail seat', found only in the East Anglian vernacular tradition, is not noted in the Price Book as a possibility. However, the mechanism is described as an 'extra' for an upholstered 'Easy Chair' with, 'the back part . . . made to fall back with racks, and hinged to the back feet, the wings fall to the back, and work in the elbows' (p. 59).

All thirteen chairs listed in Diagram 2 are described in the Price Book as being available in 'Elm, Ash, Beech or Walnuttree'. During field research in East Anglia, no chairs were found to be made in ash or beech, and rarely in walnut. However, alder, not mentioned in the Price Book, was recorded, and perhaps used as an alternative to mahogany. Cherrywood is listed as being an option at the extra cost of $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ in the shilling, and certainly fruitwood chairs have been recorded. It would be interesting to know why cherrywood warranted a higher piece-work rate than the other woods. It is easier to work than seasoned elm, and that it is a rarer timber than Elm should make no obvious difference to the working price.

It is not clear how congruent these detailed descriptions are with the vernacular chairs made throughout the East Anglian region. It would seem that since the journeymen conceived and organised the book, they found its use convenient, but perhaps its use was restricted to the organised cabinet and chair making trades in Norwich only. There are

Diagram 1. An outline representation of the basic form of 'Square Back Elm Kitchen Chair No. II' listed in the general description, with no 'extras'. The maker would have been paid two shillings for framing this unpolished, unstained chair. Figure 6 shows an example of this style of chair.

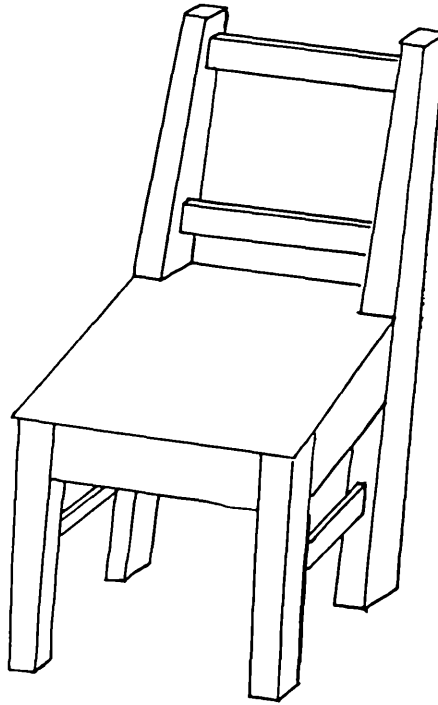


Diagram 2. Schematic comparison of the basic descriptions of the thirteen 'common' chairs in the Norwich Price Book

	Figure Number	Page in Price Book	Basic Price	Elm, Ash, Beech, Walnut	Flat Seat	Hollow Seat	Loose Seat	Matted Seat	Plain Banister and Pedestal	Straight Top and Stay Rail	Plain Banister with Straight Joint in Top	Wide Top	Round Top	Dove-Tailed on Back Feet	Plain Tapered Back Feet Above Seat	Straight Upper Ends of Back Feet	Single Pitch Back Feet	Plain Malbro' Feet	2 Rails of a Side	Lower Rails	Straight Braces	Straight Seat Rails	Straight in Front	Blocks in Front Corners	Plain Slips	Scrowl Elbows	Outside Elbows
Kitchen Chair No. I	3	1	2/-	•	•				•							•	•	•									
Kitchen Chair No. II	5	2	2/-	•	•					•					•		•	•	•								
Elm Hollow-Seat Chair	7	3	2/4	•		•					•						•	•	•					•			
Square-Back Elm-Chair	9	4	2/6	•		•				•					•		•	•	•								
Square-Back Elm-Chair with Wide Top	11	6	2/10	•		•					•				•	•	•	•	•					•			
Elm Loose-Seat Chair	13	7	2/8	•			•		•		•						•	•	•				•	•	•		
Elm Loose-Seat Square-Back Chair	-	8	2/8	•			•			•					•	•	•	•	•				•	•			
Elm Loose-Seat Chair with Wide Top	15	9	2/11	•			•			•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•				•	•			
Matted Seat Chair	-	10	2/-	•				•	•								•	•	•				•				
Elm Matted-Seat Smoking Chair	17	37	4/6	•				•	•				•				•		•		•		•		•	•	
Elm Nail-Seat Smoking Chair	17	37	5/-	•	•				•				•					•			•	•					•
Elm Banister-Back Table Chair	-	44	3/6	•	•				•		•						•	•	•								•
Elm Square-Back Table Chair	19	45	3/6	•	•					•					•	•	•	•	•				•	•			•

A KITCHEN CHAIR, No. 1.

FOR framing and sweeping a kitchen chair, elm, ash, beech,
or walnut-tree, flat seat, with two rails of a side; single
pitch back feet, plain banister and pedestal, plain
Marlbro' feet. - - - - £ 0 2 0

EXTRAS.

For a vase back top - - - -	0	0	$\frac{1}{2}$
Working the pedestal with plain hollow, each	0	0	1
If with quarter round and plain hollow, each	0	0	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Round upper ends to back feet, each chair	0	0	1
Double pitch, or round lower ends, each ditto	0	0	2
Each extra rail to single pitch back feet -	0	0	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Each ditto to double pitch ditto - -	0	0	2
Tapering front feet, each side - - -	0	0	0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Working an oval, or quarter round on edge of bottom - - - - -	0	0	2
For cutting holes in banister, each hole -	0	0	1
For a into the top, each ditto - - -	0	0	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
For other extras— <i>See tables.</i>			

3. Specification for A Kitchen Chair No. 1

OPPOSITE
4. Kitchen chair, elm
Courtesy Norfolk Museum
Service



A SQUARE BACK KITCHEN CHAIR, No. II.

5. Specification for A Square
Back Kitchen Chair No. II

FOR framing a square back Kitchen Chair, elm, ash, beech,
or walnut-tree, with straight top, and stay rail; single
pitch-back feet, plain tapered above the seat; flat seat,
with two rails of a side; plain Marlbro' feet, without
banister, or splats - - - £.0 2 0

EXTRAS.

For a top, hollow in front, not exceeding one inch in hollow - - -	0 0 2
Stay rail, the same hollow in front - -	0 0 1
If top be more than inch in the hollow, not ex- ceeding inch and half - - -	0 0 3
Stay rail, the same hollow in front - -	0 0 1½
So on in proportion to the hollow of each top and stay rail	
Double pitch-back feet, each chair - -	0 0 2
Top with one plain sweep - - -	0 0 4
Top with a plain sweep and break at the corners - - -	0 0 5
Top with hollow corners, and straight in the middle - - -	0 0 5
Stay rail, with one plain sweep - - -	0 0 2
Round upper ends to back feet, each chair -	0 0 1
Cutting up ditto, with a hollow under stay rail, each chair - - -	0 0 2
Framing straight splats, not exceeding one inch in joint, each splat - -	0 0 1½
If splats are more than one inch in joint, not exceeding two inches in ditto -	0 0 2
And so on in proportion, according to the width of each splat.	
If splats are round in front, each splat extra from straight ones - - -	0 0 0½
Cutting holes in splats, each hole - -	0 0 1
Outsides of ditto to be charged for according to the work there is in them.	
If these chairs are made of cherry-tree, charge extra from other common wood, in each shilling - - -	0 0 1½
For other extras—See tables.	



6. Kitchen Chair, alder, similar to the specification in Figure 5 but with some 'extras'

AN ELM HOLLOW-SEAT CHAIR.

FOR framing and sweeping a hollow seat, wood-bottom chair; elm, ash, beech, or walnut-tree, with two rails on each side, single pitch back feet, plain banister, with straight joint in the top, straight in front, plain Marlbro' feet - - - £.0 2 4

EXTRAS.

For a vase top - - - - - 0 0 4
 Tops hollow in front, if the hollow do not exceed one inch, each - - - - - 0 0 2
 If the tops are more than an inch in hollow, not exceeding one inch and a half, each - - - - - 0 0 3
 And so on in proportion to the hollow of each top.
 For a pedicel - - - - - 0 0 4
 Working ditto with a hollow - - - - - 0 0 2
 If with a quarter round and hollow - - - - - 0 0 3
 Round upper and to back foot, each chair - - - - - 0 0 1
 Double pitch, or round lower end, each ditto - - - - - 0 0 2
 Each extra rail to single pitch-back foot - - - - - 0 0 1½
 Each ditto to double pitch, or round lower ends, ditto - - - - - 0 0 2
 Tapering feet, each side - - - - - 0 0 0½
 Working quarter-round, or ovalo, on edge of bottom - - - - - 0 0 3
 Cutting holes in banisters, each hole - - - - - 0 0 1
 If holes are cut into the top, each ditto - - - - - 0 0 1½
 Banister round in front - - - - - 0 0 1
 If the chairs are made of cherry-tree, to be charged extra from other common wood in each filling - - - - - 0 0 1½
 For other extras—See tables.

A SQUARE-BACK ELM-CHAIR.

FOR framing a square back, stay rail, hollow seat, wood-bottomed chair; elm, ash, beech, or walnut-tree, with straight top and stay rail, single pitch back feet, plain taper above the seat, with two rails on a side, plain Marlbro' feet, without banisters or splats £.0 2 6

EXTRAS.

For a top hollow in front, not exceeding one inch in hollow - - - - - 0 0 2
 Stay rail, the same hollow in front - - - - - 0 0 1
 If top is more than one inch in hollow, not exceeding an inch and a half - - - - - 0 0 3
 Stay rail, the same hollow - - - - - 0 0 1½
 And so on in proportion to the hollow of each top and stay rail.
 Top with one plain sweep - - - - - 0 0 4
 Top with one sweep, and breaks at corners - - - - - 0 0 5
 Ditto with hollow corners, straight in the middle - - - - - 0 0 5
 Stay rail, with one plain sweep - - - - - 0 0 2
 Round upper ends to back feet, each chair - - - - - 0 0 1
 Cutting up back feet, with hollow under stay rail, each chair - - - - - 0 0 2
 Straight splats, not exceeding one inch in joint, each - - - - - 0 0 1½
 If more than inch in joint, not exceeding two inches, each ditto - - - - - 0 0 2
 And so on in proportion, according to the width of each splat.
 For double pitch, or round lower ends to back feet, each chair - - - - - 0 0 2
 Each extra rail to single pitch back feet - - - - - 0 0 1½
 Each ditto to double pitch, or round lower end - - - - - 0 0 2
 For other extras—See tables.

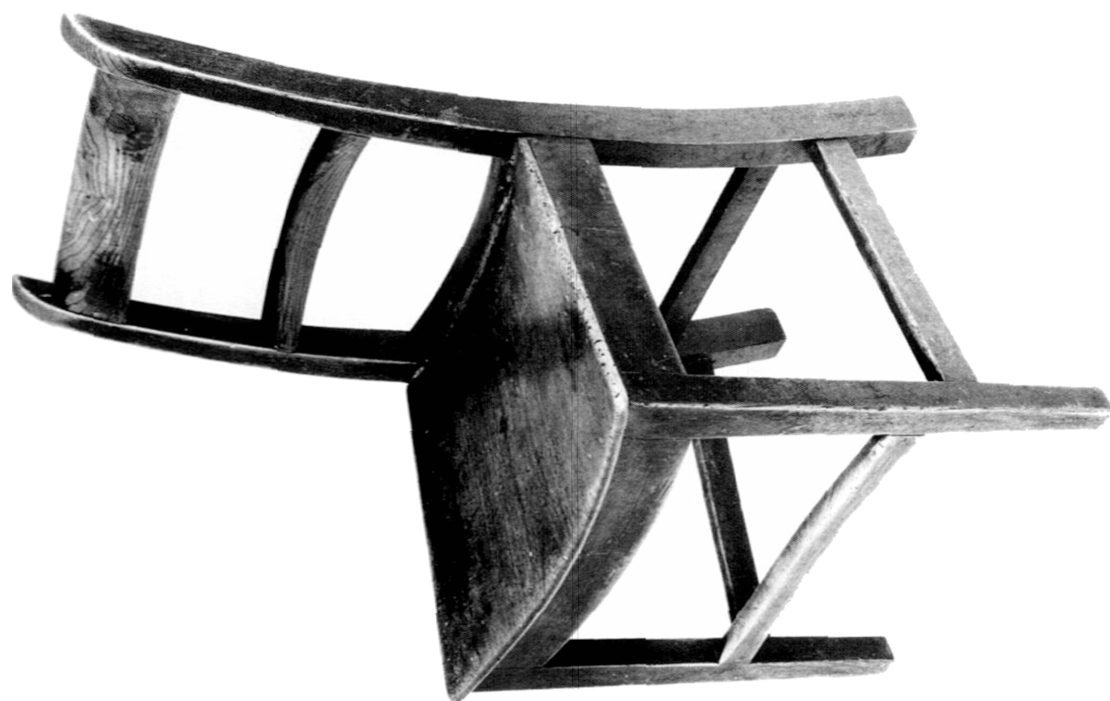
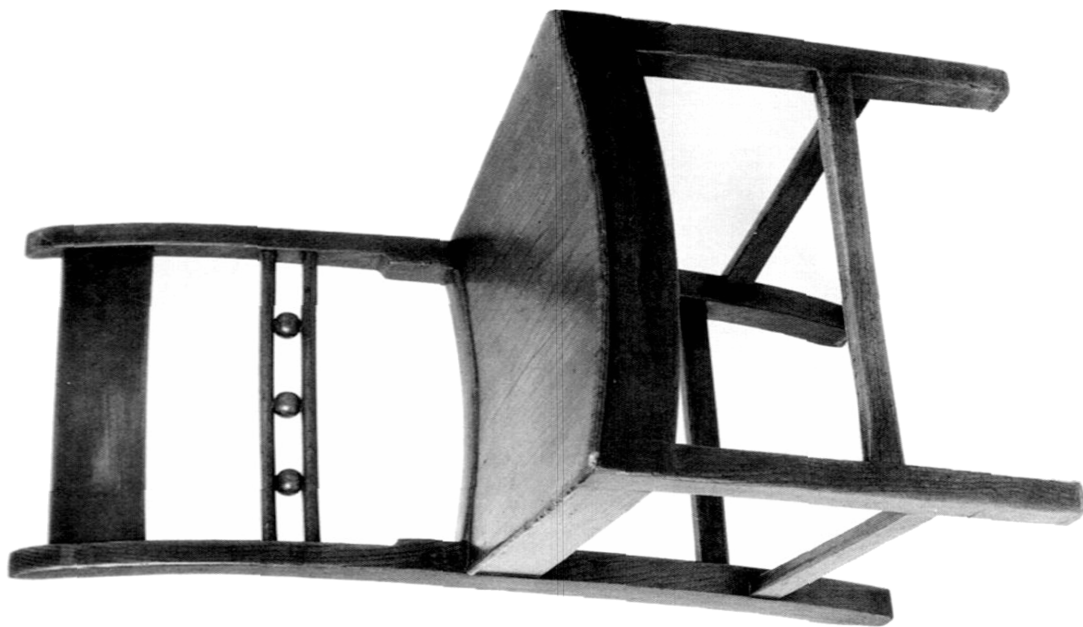
7. Specification for An Elm Hollow-Seat Chair

8. Specification for A Square-Back Elm-Chair

OPPOSITE

9. Square-back elm chair of a basic design

10. Square-back elm chair with turned 'buttons' and other 'extras'



certainly some features consistently found in East Anglian chairs from the first quarter of the nineteenth century which do not appear as items in the Price Book. For example, the use of hessian strips glued under the 'hollow' seats to support them, is not included, and only one slight reference to commode or night chairs. This is a remarkable omission, since night chairs with back designs adapted from conventional 'elbow' chair styles are commonly found. The Norwich Price book's value as a guide to the historian's perception of nineteenth-century East Anglian chair style, construction, and contemporary terminology cannot be over-stated, since it offers a schematic and organised sense of the design issues which confronted the makers.

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NOTES ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS

All Illustrations of the Norwich Chair Makers' Price Book of 1801 appear courtesy Norfolk Library and Information Service. Measurements are in cm: hh, total back height. h, height from seat to top. w, width of seat at widest point. d, depth of seat front to back.

1. The Introduction to the Norwich Chair Makers' Price Book of 1801, second edition, printed in Norwich by J. Payne. It is interesting to note that although prices for the production of individual chair parts are precisely given, no indication is given for the 'time' rate mentioned above for preparing timber, 'oiling, polishing and staining', etc.
2. The Table of Extras which might apply to the design of any of the items of seating furniture. The second part of the list gives prices for sawing out the blanks for the various components.
3. A Kitchen Chair No. I from the Norwich Price Book.
4. An example of a 'Kitchen Chair I' conforming to the basic description in Figure 3. This chair is made entirely in elm. Apart from the 'vase back top' which is priced at 4d., there appear to be no extras worked on this chair, and the maker would have received two shillings and fourpence (12p) for his labour. The 'Elm Hollow Seat Chair', Figure 7, is of the same basic form, apart from the hollow seat. Photograph courtesy Norfolk Rural Life Museum, Gressenhall.
5. Square Back Kitchen Chair No. II from the Norwich Price Book.
6. This chair, made entirely in alder, conforms with the basic description of a Kitchen Chair No. II in Figure 5, but with the addition of several 'extras'. The top and stay rails are slightly hollowed, 'not exceeding one inch'. There are four reeded straight vertical splats, and three horizontal splats separated by three 'buttons'. The term 'splat' is used in the Norwich Price Book to describe either the horizontal or the vertical members in chair backs. The shaped top rail, 'with hollow corners, and straight in the middle' was chargeable at 5d. The tops of the back uprights, called 'upper ends to back feet' are rounded, and were charged at 1d. per chair. 92 hh, 48 h, 47½ w, 39 d.

7. From the basic description, it would seem that the Elm Hollow Seat Chair is closely similar to Kitchen Chair No. 1, Figure 4, apart from the seat form, which, being more complex to make, added 4d. to the basic cost of the chair. The lists of extras are also closely similar. See Figure 3.

8. Square-Back Elm-Chair from the Norwich Price Book.

9. This simple 'Square-Back Elm-Chair' is almost as fundamental as the basic description. The only extras are the hollows in the top and stay rails, providing extra comfort, and the 'round upper ends to the back feet'. The underneath of the hollow seat is strengthened with strips of hessian which are glued over the joints of the seat to the seat rails. This constructional feature is commonly found in East Anglian hollow seated chairs. 79½ hh, 39 h, 47 w, 37 d.

10. A slightly more elaborate form of the 'Square-Back Elm-Chair' than Figure 9 this chair incorporates three turned balls or 'buttons' between narrow rounded-front stay rails in the chair back. It also includes the optional extra of 'cutting up back feet with hollow under stay rail', which has the effect of lightening and improving the chair style. 85 hh, 43½ h, 45 w, 36 d.

11. A Square-Back Elm Chair with Wide Top from the Norwich Price Book.

12. This elegant chair conforms to the general description of the 'Square Back Elm Chair with Wide Top'. No reference is made in the Price Book to a 'hollow' seat reclining chair, although one of the extras for the 'Easy Chair' (p. 59), an upholstered wing arm chair, states: 'If the back part is made to fall back with racks, and hinged to the back feet, the wings fall to the back, and work in the elbows — 3 shillings 6d.'. The mechanism on this elm chair conforms to this description. Non-reclining chairs of this height (123 cm) have been recorded, but arm chairs in the East Anglian regional tradition are more usually of a similar height to the side chairs. See Figure 16. The cross stretcher connecting the two lower side stretchers is missing, and there are obvious cracks in the hollow seat which was originally formed of one thin plank of elm. The lower part of the back possibly once had an applied upholstered panel which is now missing. The general table of extras, Diagram 2, includes 'Cutting the corners of chairs, to form a rabbit for caning or canvassing, each chair 1d.'. The arms or 'stumps and elbows' were listed separately in the Price Book, and these were priced at one shilling and ninepence (8p) a pair. 123 hh, 80 h, 58½ w, 49 d.

13. Elm Loose-Seat Chair from the Norwich Price Book.

14. This elaborately banistered 'Elm Loose Seat Chair' conforms with the general description in Figure 13. The loose seat in this chair is rushed, but could also have been upholstered. The rushing of this loose seat would not have been included in the chair maker's work, as this was always considered a separate trade, usually undertaken by men. However, the frame on to which the rush was woven would have been part of the chair maker's work. The splat with nine holes was priced as an extra at '1d. per hole' If the pedestal is compared with Kitchen Chair No. 1, Figure 4, it can be seen that this chair has a 'plain hollow' in the pedestal, costing an extra 2d. The maker should have received 3s. 7d. (18p) for this chair.

15. An Elm Loose Seat Chair with Wide Top from the Norwich Price Book.

16. This commode or 'night chair' is a version of the 'Elm Loose-Seat Chair with a Wide Top', and is of the same size and proportions as an ordinary arm chair. It is, unusually in this regional tradition, made in alder, a wood not mentioned in the Price Book. It was probably originally stained to simulate mahogany, and later stripped to its present pale colour. The chair has swept French arms or 'elbows', with 'turned stumps and front legs in one' (p. 67). The loose seat is finely rushed, but other examples have been recorded with upholstered seats. The support for the chamber-pot, seat, and pot lid with integral knob, are all made in pine. This particular chair probably dates from around 1840. Many commode chairs have been recorded, and these are all adaptations of conventional arm chair styles which had been framed with deep seat rails on each side to conceal the chamber-pot. The particular shaping of these seat rails appears to be a feature of East Anglian night chairs and night-stools. The general table of extras includes a price for veneering a commode front rail, and a comprehensive

A SQUARE-BACK ELM CHAIR, WITH WIDE TOP.

11. Specification for A Square-Back Elm Chair, with wide top

FOR turning a hollow seat, square back, stay-rail chair; wide top, straight in front; elm, ash, beech, or walnut-tree, with single pitch, and straight upper ends of back feet, with plain taper above the seat, with two rails on a side, plain Marlbro' feet, without splats or banisters

£.0 2 10

EXTRAS.

For a top, hollow in front, not exceeding an inch and a quarter in the hollow	-	0	0	2½
Stay-rail, the same hollow in front	-	0	0	1½
If the top is more than inch and quarter in the hollow, not exceeding two inches		0	0	3½
Stay rail, the same hollow in front	-	0	0	1½
Round upper ends of back feet, each chair		0	0	1
Cutting up with a hollow, each ditto	-	0	0	2
Double pitch, or round lower ends to back feet, each chair	- - - -	0	0	2
Extra rails to single pitch back feet, each		0	0	1½
Ditto to double pitch, or round lower ends, each	- - - -	0	0	2
Straight upright or cross splats, not exceeding one inch in joint, each splat, single shoulder		0	0	1½
If more than one inch in joint, not exceeding an inch and a half, each splat	-	0	0	2
And so on in proportion for every half inch.				
For round front to splats, each splat extra from a straight one	- - - -	0	0	0½
Framing two straight splats, lapped together to form a cross	- - - -	0	0	8
Framing two straight splats, lapped together to form a cross, hollow in front	-	0	0	10
For four ogree splats, to form a gothic and diamond in the middle, to a top straight in front, each chair	- - -	0	1	9
If hollow in the front, each chair	- -	0	2	0
For all other extras—See tables.				



12. Square back
reclining chair; elm
with hollow seat

AN ELM LOOSE-SEAT CHAIR.

FRAMING and sweeping a loose-seat banister-back chair,
elm, ash, beech, or walnut-tree, straight joint in top,
top straight in front, single pitch back feet, with two
rails on a side, straight seat rails, plain banister and
pedestal, plain Marlboro' feet, with blocks in front
corners - - - - £.0 2 8

EXTRAS.

For a top, hollow in front, the hollow not ex-								
ceeding one inch	-	-	-		0	0	2	
Double pitch, or round lower ends to back feet,								
each chair	-	-	-	-	0	0	2	
Hollow seat	-	-	-	-	0	0	10	
Working straight pedestal with plain hollow					0	0	2	
If with hollow and quarter-round	-	-			0	0	2½	
A hollow ditto, with plain hollow	-	-			0	0	2½	
If with quarter-round and hollow	-	-			0	0	3	
Tapering feet, each side	-	-	-		0	0	0½	
Round upper ends to back feet, each chair					0	0	1	
Banister round in front	.	-	-		0	0	1	

For other extras—*See tables.*



14. Elm
loose-seat chair,
with *rush* seat,
comparable to the
specification in
Figure 13

AN ELM LOOSE SEAT CHAIR, WITH WIDE TOP,

15. Specification
for An Elm Loose
Seat Chair, with
wide top

FOR framing a loose-seat square-back stay rail chair, with wide top, dove-tailed on the back feet; elm, ash, beech, or walnut-tree; straight top and stay rail; straight in front; single pitch-back feet; straight upper ends, with plain taper above the seat, with two rails of a side; straight seat rails; plain Marlbro' feet, without banister or splats.

£.0 2 11

EXTRAS.

For a top hollow in front, not exceeding one

inch in hollow	-	-	-	-	0	0	2½
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Stay rail the same, hollow in front	-	-	-	-	0	0	1½
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If the top is more than inch in hollow, not exceeding two inches	-	-	-	-	0	0	3½
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Stay rail, the same hollow in front	-	-	-	-	0	0	1½
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And so on in proportion to the hollow of each top and stay rail.

Straight splats, not exceeding one inch in joint,	-	-	-	-	0	0	1½
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If more than inch, not exceeding two inches, each ditto	-	-	-	-	0	0	2
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And so in proportion to the width of each splat.

If splats are round in front, each	-	-	-	-	0	0	0½
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For two straight splats, lapped together to form a cross	-	-	-	-	0	0	8
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If ditto is hollow in front	-	-	-	-	0	0	10
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For four ogree splats, to form a gothic and diamond in the middle to a straight top	-	-	-	-	0	1	6
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For ditto to a hollow top	-	-	-	-	0	1	8
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OPPOSITE
16. Commode or
'night chair',
alder, with loose
rush seat and wide
top



AN ELM MATTED-SEAT, SMOAKING CHAIR.

17. Specification for
Smoking Chairs

FOR framing and sweeping a matted-seat, banister-back,
smoaking chair, elm, ash, &c. round top, scrowl
elbows, plain banisters and pedestals, straight seat rails,
plain Marlbro feet, plain slips, with lower rails

£.0 4 6

For extras—*See elm nail-seat, smoaking chair.*

AN ELM NAIL-SEAT, SMOAKING CHAIR.

FOR framing and sweeping a nail-seat, banister-back, smoak-
ing chair, elm, ash, beech, or walnut-tree ; round top,
scrowl elbows, plain banisters and pedestals, straight
seat rails, plain Marlbro feet, straight braces, without
lower rails, or cross stretcher - 0 5 0

EXTRAS

For framing a back board into the top	0 0 0
Sweeping to be paid for according to the work that is in it.	
Cutting holes in banisters, each hole - -	0 0 1
Working pedestal with a hollow - -	0 0 2
If with hollow and a quarter round - -	0 0 2½
If with lower rails, each chair - - -	0 0 6
If with cross stretcher - - - -	0 0 8
For a loose seat - - - - -	0 0 10
Working an oval on the frame of ditto -	0 0 2
Tapering of feet, each side - - -	0 0 0½
For other extras— <i>See tables.</i>	

OPPOSITE
18. Corner seat
smoking chair, elm,
wit 'nail seat'



AN ELM SQUARE-BACK TABLE-CHAIR.

19. Specification for
An Elm Square —
Back Table-Chair

FRAMING a flat-seat, square-back, stay-rail table-chair, elm,
ash, beech, or walnut-tree ; straight top, and stay-rail ;
straight in front ; single pitch-back feet ; straight
upper ends ; plain taper above the seat, with two rails
on a side ; plain Marlbro' feet ; elbows in the plain-
est state, to receive a stick, without splats or banister

£:0 2 6

For a wide top, straight in front, dove-tailed

on back feet - - - - - 0 0 3

Stay-rail, the same hollow in front - 0 0 1

Top, hollow in front - - - - - 0 0 2

Round upper ends to back feet, each chair 0 0 1

Cutting up ditto, with a hollow under stay-
rail, each chair - - - - - 0 0 2

Double pitch, or round lower ends or ditto 0 0 2

Top, one plain sweep - - - - - 0 0 3

Top, with one plain sweep, and break at
corners - - - - - 0 0 4

Hollow cornered top, straight in the middle 0 0 4

Framing straight upright splats, not exceeding
one inch in joint, each splat - - - 0 0 1½

If splats are more than one inch in joint, not
exceeding one inch and a half, each
ditto - - - - - 0 0 2

And so on in proportion to the width of each
splat.

Splat round in front, each - - - - - 0 0 0½

For other extras—See tables.



20. Square back child's high or 'table chair' in the East Anglian tradition

description of a mahogany 'night-chair' is given, costing 8s. to make, but only 7s. if made in 'elm ash beech or walnuttree' (p. 43). A 'Night stool' is also described. 86 hh, 43 h, 55½ w, 45 d.

17. An Elm Matted-Seat Smoaking Chair and an Elm Nail Seat Smoaking Chair from the Norwich Price Book.

18. This corner smoking chair, made entirely in elm, conforms to the general description of the Elm Nail-seat Smoaking (*sic*) Chair in Figure 17. The only East Anglian chairs recorded with the 'round top and scrowl elbows' were corner chairs, that is, with a right angle at the front seat centre. Despite its appearance, this chair is extremely comfortable. Other East Anglian examples have been recorded with two pierced balusters rather than the eight reeded vertical splats in this example. The multiple ring turnings on the 'stumps' (under-arm supports) and the central back stump, are a decorative feature noted in many East Anglian chairs. In its basic form, the nail seat smoking chair was the most costly of the East Anglian 'common' chairs to produce in terms of labour, at five shillings (25p). The lower rails would have cost a further sixpence (3p). 75 hh, 35½ h, 72 2, 62 d.

19. Elm Square-Back Table-Chair from the Norwich Price Book.

20. The Elm Square-Back Table-Chair is one of six children's high chairs described in the Price Book, two of which are elm. The other elm chair has a plain banister and pedestal incorporated in the back design, similar to Kitchen Chair No. 1, Figure 4. The turned spindles in the back of this chair, although unusual in the East Anglian regional tradition, are, however priced as a stylistic possibility in the general table of extras at 1d. each. There are no holes in the elbows 'to receive a stick' to restrain the child, but there are holes in the front legs to receive an adjustable foot-rest, now missing. The description of a mahogany table-chair which follows this chair in the Price Book (p. 46) has the labour cost for a 'foot-board' as 8d., as well as many possibilities for decoration in the back, and seat styles; 'hollow', 'loose-seat', or 'close stool seat'. Although no description is given in the Price Book for low children's chairs, many have been recorded in East Anglia which conform to the adult styles in the Price Book, except that all have 'elbows and stumps'. 84 hh, 29½ h, 33 w, 28 d.