

## FURNITURE NOTES

### Trade disputes in Newcastle upon Tyne

Sebastian Pryke in his article in the Edinburgh furniture trade (Regional Furniture (1989), 3, 52-67) refers to a dispute between masters and journeymen in the 1780's, and comments on advertisements placed in the Edinburgh press by Newcastle masters and journeymen indicating a similar dispute there. The following further information on the Newcastle dispute may be of interest.

An advertisement in the Newcastle Courant of 19th June 1784 was placed by the Newcastle journeymen cabinet-makers and joiners asking their colleagues in the adjacent counties only to "supply the necessities" to those masters "willing to allow twelve hours to be a sufficient day's work". The Newcastle journeymen also offered their labour to masters in the country (where presumably they would not be required to work more than a 12 hour day).

An advertisement on 3rd July from the same source acknowledged the co-operation of the county journeymen in the dispute.

The masters inserted an advertisement on 17th July asking for joiners and cabinet-makers. "Good hands will meet with proper encouragement, either by piece or day. The Masters are determined not to be imposed upon

by the present set of men in town, as they will not be satisfied on reasonable terms". In the same issue the journeymen warned their colleagues against responding to the masters' advertisements "lest they be deceived".

I have found no indication of how this dispute was resolved, but matters came to a head again in 1788 when Devergy Lisle, one of the leading cabinet-makers in the city, at the end of a coventional advertisement added the following:

Good Cabinet-Makers, if sober men, will meet with proper encouragement, by applying as above. (Newcastle Courant 9/12/1788).

On 16th February and 1st March the journeymen responded:

...Had that proper encouragement been given which is promised, there had been no occasion for such an Advertisement. - There are already too many Good and Sober Cabinet-makers out of Work by such proper encouragement.

The dispute evidently lingered on, for three months later the masters advertised for journeymen:

...Good workmen...may depend upon being employed throughout the Winter Season. N.B. Two or three hundred is wanted, there being a great number of buildings to

furnish. (Newcastle Courant 21/6/1788).

It was this time that the masters advertised in the Edinburgh press, hoping to attract journeymen to Newcastle.

It would be interesting to know how widespread these disputes were and whether there is any information on how they were resolved.

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