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## GEORGE NICOLLE 'THE WOODWORKING TRADES: A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY'.

1993 Twybill Press, Plymouth. ISBN 0 9522285 05,  
160pp £12.95 hardback.

George Nicolle, who recently retired as Senior Lecturer in Wood Trades at the Plymouth College of Further Education, has undertaken a very ambitious project in his bibliography of the woodworking trades. Seventeen trades have been considered, from brushmakers to wheelwrights, and a further four chapters have been included: on workers in craft industries, rural woodworkers, tools and trades, and 'the Book of Trades'. The 316 entries each contain a bibliographic description and review of the volume or article.

In his introduction George Nicolle says he intends this select bibliography to be a guide for researchers, students and teachers, librarians and the general reader; he has aimed to provide 'adequate coverage for each of the woodworking trades' and has 'searched for the most pertinent titles'. I am only able to assess Mr Nicolle's success in achieving these stated aims in his chapters on chairmakers and furniture makers, which brings me straightaway to a disappointment: although the book is entitled "The Woodworking Trades", Mr Nicolle has entitled the individual chapters '....makers' and, at least in the case of furniture makers, this seems to have put any of the publications intended for use by the trade outside his remit. There is no mention of any of the period technical publications produced for furniture makers, nor of any of the books of design used by the trade from the 16th century onwards, while the only mention of any of the Cabinetmakers Books of Prices comes in Mr Nicolle's notes on Christopher Gilbert's *English Vernacular Furniture 1750-1900*. If we now consider we are dealing with a bibliography of furniture makers rather than the furniture making trade, there still appear to be some notable omissions. For example, I would argue for the inclusion of Ralph Edward's and Margaret Jourdain's important early work on Georgian Cabinetmakers, first published in 1944, and for the comprehensive account of the 18th century cabinetmakers William and John Linnell produced in 1980 by Helena Hayward and Pat Kirkham. I would also include Victor Chinnery's *'Oak Furniture, the British Tradition'* and Benno Forman's *'American Seating Furniture 1630-1730'*, with their detailed information on the furniture making trade as well as on particular furniture makers.

The debate on what to include is endless and one of Mr Nicolle's problems must have been the constraints caused by the size of this volume. It would be easy enough to produce a bibliography of this size on the furniture trade alone— many members will remember the extensive lists of recent publications on furniture which Ivan Sparkes used to prepare for the Furniture History Society and the Regional Furniture Society. Mr Nicolle has included many useful entries of 'official' trade histories - accounts of the various Worshipful Companies and their published records, while his special interests, as evidenced by his membership of the Tools and Trades History Society and the Early American Industries Association, have resulted in a very wide spread of material and the inclusion of many items from America and Canada not generally listed in a British bibliography. The entries of articles from the Journal and newsletter of the Tool and Trade Society make these publications seem essential reading. Mr Nicolle's idea of a combined bibliography for the woodworking trades does bring together many interesting references on related disciplines. The book has obviously been produced with enthusiasm by someone with a deep interest in the subjects; perhaps in the future we may look forward to an enlarged edition.

*Michael Legg*