

The Traditional Upholstery Workshop

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Look up the word UPHOLSTERING in any dictionary and its definition will be very dull 'to provide chairs, sofas or similar soft furniture with stuffing, springs, cushions, and covering fabric' But for the Upholsterer who has vision and enthusiasm the word means just so much more....

It means taking an old chair and peeling back the layers of history - each giving clues to its past

It means repairing the frame that has worked loose over the years - to make it strong and serviceable for decades to come

It means restoring the show wood back to its former glory - with stains and polish and wax

It means creating a seat exactly the way it should be - to make it really comfortable and supporting using webbing, springs, stuffing, hessian, cotton flock and calico

It means choosing a fabric that will delight, dazzle, amaze, or perhaps quietly please the senses

It means that when you have finished you have created a piece of furniture that is you in every sense of the word. Not produced by a factory down to a price - but tailored by you to be what you wanted. Its shape, its comfort, its strength and beauty - you did it all!

If you want to breathe new life into furniture, but don't quite know how to go about it, a course at The Traditional Upholstery Workshop will probably be the answer. The courses are run by Liz Marks and with a maximum of five students per course the amount of tuition you receive individually is exceptional. We are members of the Association of Master Upholsterers and Soft Furnishers and have been teaching courses in upholstery, full-time, since the business was established in 1990.

We boast a reputation of being the best in the country, a centre of excellence and we work very hard to retain this image. In addition to the UK our students come from many other countries, including the USA, Australia and Europe. Many of our students, especially those who have done the AMUSF diploma course, have gone on to run their own business repairing and selling traditional furniture.

What will you learn? During your first week as a beginner you could learn the basic principles of upholstery depending on the furniture you work on; webbing, springing, stuffing, re-covering and shallow buttoning. You will learn about upholstery tools and sundries. In addition you will examine fabrics, practice measuring up and cutting out.

If you already have experience of the above either as a result of night classes or have attended one of our courses before, you may want to go on to more advanced upholstery. You can learn the complete re-building of furniture from the frame up - sometimes with sprung arms and back. This may include the practice of stitched-edge rolls, deep buttoning and the use of gimps and braids.

The number of students at one time is very small, usually up to a maximum of five with two tutors and therefore the tuition is geared to your needs. Our courses are of a week long duration, from Monday to Friday and we have a mixture of new and experienced students each week. We have no particular starting date for a course as they are run year round.

We are proud to be members of the [Association of Master Upholsterers and Soft Furnishers](#) - a national organisation founded in 1947.

[The Traditional Upholstery Workshop](#) is an approved training centre for the [AMUSF](#).

Some of our students come for just a week as a taster but the majority want to learn more. For those planning a career change or who want an in depth knowledge of upholstery we offer the AMUSF Diploma. We recommend that this intensive course be spread over a period of time e.g. two weeks length stays spread over a period of up to three years, however we can be flexible to your requirements and are happy to discuss this.

In the pages below you will find a syllabus for each of the three stages which lists all the basic items of furniture you will become familiar with. These range from dining chairs and Ottoman boxes to Nursing chairs and substantial armchairs and also to more modern projects such as the Egg chair.

For your first week suitable furniture would be a drop-in seat and a stuff over dining chair either with or without springs. If you think the AMUSF qualification may be for you, bring two drop-in seats and a stitched and stuffed chair without springs and your initial week could count towards your Stage One certificate.

We are able to carry out minor repairs to furniture at the workshop, but do recommend that you try to make sure that your furniture is sound before you bring it. We have a small supply of Ottoman box frames available for sale - just ask for details. When you have booked your first weeks, we can send you more detailed information, which should help you identify suitable pieces.

Fabrics If you have your own fabrics - of course you should bring them. If you are unsure about the quantity you need - check with your fabric supplier or ring us. If you need several metres - we can order it for you from our suppliers. We carry a range of sample books and sell fabrics at reasonable prices.

Sundry materials such as webbing, tacks, stuffing materials, hessian, glue, etc are recorded as used and charged for on departure.

Other items Please bring a notepad and don't forget your camera if you have one - you'll find it useful to record stages of your work and that of others at various stages. Don't forget to bring old clothes or an apron or overalls.

Tools Each student will have the use of a toolbox with a dozen or so commonly used tools, but if you have your own tools please feel free to bring them.

It is recommended that you bring a pair of sharp fabric scissors for your exclusive use.

BITE-SIZED COURSES FOR ALL ABILITIES

If you are looking for a less formal approach to learning upholstery then we offer week long courses to suit all levels of experience.

Each week can be booked with a particular piece of furniture in mind, or we can discuss your requirements and suggest the most appropriate furniture to bring.

We are flexible. Book your initial upholstery training week, then book further weeks when you get here.

The photographs below give an idea of chairs that may be suitable for a beginner to bring on a first week.

If you have some upholstery experience already, contact us and we can discuss the best next step for you.



Drop-in seat

This is a typical drop-in seat, so called because the padded seat drops into the frame of the chair.

The triangular blocks at the four corners of the empty seat support an empty frame (much like a picture frame) onto which you will build layers of webbing, stuffing and other materials, to form a remarkably comfortable seat.

Don't worry if the frame of the chair is a little battered or tired. You will have the opportunity to renovate that too during the first day or so.



Stuff-over seat

This is known as a 'stuff over' chair. As the name suggests, this type of chair has stuffing that flows over the seat pad and is attached to the front, sides and back of the chair.

At first glance, this stuff over seat may appear very similar to the drop-in seat, if a little more curvy. The main difference is that the visible material comes all the way down the front and sides of the chair, as far as the tops of the legs. The other difference is that there is no additional wooden frame to drop in. All the support is provided by the materials you fix to the frame.

We recommend that you start with a seat that has no springs. You can usually tell if there are springs or not by looking at the underside of the seat and feeling for the sharp circles of springs stitched to the bottom material.

THE ASSOCIATION OF MASTER UPHOLSTERERS AND SOFT FURNISHERS ACCREDITED COURSES

The AMUSF Diploma consists of three stages which take a minimum of six weeks each to complete and follow a syllabus of work which is structured and assessed by the AMUSF.

The Stage 1 - introductory Craft Certificate introduces the student to basic upholstery techniques and leads on to the Stage 2 - Intermediate Craft Skills certificate which covers more advanced techniques. The Stage 3 - Diploma is designed to consolidate and advance the skills learnt and provides a basic grounding for those considering pursuing upholstery as a career.

Stage 1 Craft Certificate

This is a six week course

During this time students will receive workshop inductions, practical demonstrations and teaching in the use and application of core materials and techniques, both modern and traditional, including instruction on:

- Health & Safety: when working with tools and equipment in a workshop environment
- Appropriate use of tools and equipment, both hand and machine
- Understanding of Domestic and Industrial Sewing machines
- Appropriate use of Fillings & Sundry Materials
- Appropriate use of techniques and processes including Knots, Blind, Top and Slip-Stitching
- Cutting, Pattern Matching and Finishing of Fabrics
- Sewing seams and decorative techniques
- Trims and Decorative detailing
- Awareness of frame repairs and polishing
- Costing Materials
- Evaluation Methods

Candidates will also produce as either exercise or actual pieces:

- Drop-in seat (modern materials)
- Drop-in seat (traditional materials including fabric and bottoming cloth)
- Stitched and stuffed footstool or chair (traditional materials and methods including fabric and bottoming)
- **Sprung dining chair (traditional materials and methods including fabric and bottoming cloth)**
- Sprung arm exercise for an inset facing (traditional materials and methods. Calico to be stitched under the roll. Fabric need not to be applied)
- Box Cushion with piping and zip (sample)
- Bolster End with piping (sample)
- **Upholstered and lined box with decorative detail and deep-buttoned lid (modern materials, with a minimum of three diamonds)**
- Scatter cushion with piping and zip
- **Note - either the box or the scatter cushion to include some form of decorative detailing / fabric manipulation.**
- Portfolio containing notes and details of work in progress
- **Written Research Project - Fabric Characteristics, Identification & Appropriate Usage**

Stage 2 Intermediate Craft Skills Certificate

This is a six week course.

The students will receive workshop inductions, practical demonstrations and teaching in the use and application of core materials and techniques, both modern and traditional, including instruction on:

- Health & Safety: when working with tools and equipment in a workshop environment
- Frame repair and polishing, including the fitting of castors
- Understanding of Industrial and Domestic sewing machines
- Appropriate use of Fillings & Sundry Materials
- Types of springs and suspension systems: coil, serpentine, tension springs, sprung units, pocket springs, rubber & elastic webbings etc.
- Appropriate use of foams and rubberized hair sheets and various pre-formed profiles
- Appropriate use of techniques and processes including Knots, Blind, Top and Slip-Stitching
- Cutting, Pattern Matching and Finishing of Fabrics
- Tailoring, including the fitting of caps and collars
- Basic Design Skills: sketching, colour co-ordination and scale drawing
- An understanding of the UK's Furniture & Furnishings (Fire)(Safety) Regulations 1988 relating to domestic furniture and furnishings
- Fabric Classifications - Martindale abrasion test
- Estimating & Costing Materials
- Evaluation Methods

Candidates will also produce:

- T-Shaped Cushion with piping and zips (samples)
- Tailoring, including the fitting of caps and collars (samples)
- Independent sprung edge for a cushion seat (exercise) (traditional materials and methods, including fabric and front border)
- **Armless chair with traditionally upholstered seat and back (seat to be sprung with coil springs)**
- **Post 1950s Armchair upholstered using modern materials & methods**
- Portfolio containing notes and details of work in progress
- **Written Research Project - History of Upholstered Furniture - a timeline and overview of the styles of upholstered furniture and the development of upholstery techniques and materials used**

Stage 3 - AMUSF Diploma

This is a six week course

The students will receive workshop inductions, practical demonstrations and teaching in the use and application of core materials and techniques, both modern and traditional, including advice on:

- Health & Safety: when working with tools and equipment in a workshop environment
- Understanding of Industrial and Domestic sewing machines
- Frame repair and polishing including fitting castors: costs and time required to undertake repairs
- Appropriate use of Fillings & Sundry Materials
- Types of springs and suspension systems: coil, serpentine, tension springs, sprung units, pocket springs, rubber & elastic webbings etc.
- Appropriate use of foams and rubberized hair sheets and various pre-formed profiles
- Appropriate use of techniques and processes including Knots, Blind, Top and Slip-Stitching
- Cutting, Pattern Matching and Finishing of Fabrics
- Tailoring, including the fitting of caps and collars
- Basic Design Skills: sketching, colour co-ordination and scale drawing
- An understanding of the UK's Furniture & Furnishings (Fire)(Safety) Regulations 1988 relating to domestic furniture and furnishings
- Fabric Classifications - Martindale abrasion test
- Estimating & Costing Materials and Labour
- Working to a deadline including timing records
- Business Studies:
- Requirements of self-employment
- H&S whilst working from home or a workshop
- Legal & Safety requirements
- Terms & Conditions
- Insurances
- PR & Marketing including social media
- Resources
- Evaluation Methods

Candidates will also produce:

- **Substantial Traditional Armchair of advanced techniques**, which should include at least two of the following elements: the fitting of caps and collars, scroll arms or stitched-up edges to arms, sprung arms, coil sprung seats, independent sprung edges, deep buttoning, fluting or an iron framed chair.
- **Modern Chair with a concave inside back** incorporating tailored fitting and top stitching
- i.e. Egg style (shell frame)
- Portfolio containing notes and details of work in progress

- **Written Research Project - 20th Century Furniture Design - an overview of the styles, periods and iconic designers of the 20th Century**

A REGISTRATION AND CERTIFICATION FEE OF £60 + VAT PER STUDENT IS PAYABLE FOR EACH STAGE OF THE AMUSF ACCREDITED COURSES. This is payable directly to the AMUSF and must be made within four weeks of starting the course.

The workshop - The workshop is located just outside the village of Meidrim, 7 miles west of Carmarthen. The view from the workshop is spectacular, looking over fields to the River Taf estuary leading to the sea at Laugharne (of Dylan Thomas fame). The workshop is well equipped with tools and solid workbenches of varying heights to suit everyone.

Traditional Upholstery Workshop Programme Hours of tuition are from 9.30 am - 5.00 pm Monday to Thursday and 9.30 am - 3.30 pm on a Friday in order to clean the workshop thoroughly before leaving at 4.00 pm, with one hour for lunch each day. Coffee/tea is served in the morning and afternoon.

The village of Meidrim is ideally placed for exploring the whole of the West Wales peninsula where you will find numerous sandy beaches, castles, places to walk and go bird watching. The excellent National Botanic Gardens of Wales and Aberglasney Gardens are about 15 miles away.

Accommodation while on our courses - please see separate accommodation list

How to get here.

If you are using satellite navigation please use the following address and postcode:

The Old Piggery, Penbigwrn, Meidrim, Carmarthenshire, SA33 5NY

Carmarthen to the workshop. O/S landranger 159 Swansea and the Gower

You will arrive in Carmarthen on the **A48** (continuation of the M4) or the **A40** from Llandeilo.

Either way take the **A 40** sign posted St Clears, Pembroke, Fishguard, Haverfordwest, Whitland, WEST. You will go past a B&Q on your left on leaving Carmarthen.

Take the A40 dual carriageway for about 3 or 4 Miles until you pass a Valero petrol station on the **right**.

Shortly afterwards is a sign for **Meidrim and Bancyfelin B 4298**.

Take this **right** turn and within 200yds is another **right** sign posted **Meidrim B4298**.

Take this for 3.5 miles. You will see a 'S' bends sign with a left T junction sign on the **left**, shortly afterwards turn left between some houses and a horse stud (**Penllwyn Plan, Small Lands and Fox Hill**).

Continue to the top of steep hill and the workshop is on the right at the top. You will need to turn in to the right just before the house (**Penbigwrn**) over the cattle grid and past some barns. Follow the road round to the right, the workshop entrance is the first gateway on your left.

If you miss the turn by **Penllwyn Plan** you will drop down a hill into the village of **Meidrim**. Turn around and go back up the hill taking the first lane on your **right** between Penllwyn Plan and Fox Hill.

HOW TO BOOK

Payment A deposit of £80.00 per person per week booked is payable when booking and this deposit is non-refundable. We will send you a receipt by return and invoice you four weeks prior to the course for the balance. This is payable by return please. Those courses booked less than four weeks in advance should be paid for in full at the time of booking. If for any unforeseen circumstance the course has to be cancelled by us we will offer an alternative date. If this is un-acceptable we will return your course fee less the deposit.

If you cancel... Less than four weeks prior to the course - there is no refund.

If you postpone... If you postpone within four weeks of your course there is a charge of 50% of the week's fee. Postponement more than four weeks in advance... we will be pleased to re-arrange another date. Courses are run throughout the year

2026	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
	29 closed	2	2	6full	4	1	6	3	7	5	2full	1
	5	9full	9	13	11	8	13full	10full	14	12	9	7
	12full	16	16	20full	18	15	20	17full	21full	19	16	14
	19full	23	23full	27	25	22full	27	24full	28	26	23	21closed
	26		30			29full		31			30	29

We...Reserve the right to cancel a course and either reimburse your fee or re-arrange another date.

Occasionally we get cancellations so even if the date you want is shown as full, please ask. Once you have decided on a date and confirmed it with us - please send in your booking form and deposit as it is the receipt of the form and deposit that guarantees your place.

TRADITIONAL UPHOLSTERY WORKSHOP PRICES AND CONDITIONS

Per week per person

£420.00 (inclusive of tuition, tea & coffee)

Payment may be made by credit/debit card, cheque payable to 'The Traditional Upholstery Workshop' or bank transfer (please see booking form for bank details).

A **non-refundable deposit of £80 per week** is required on reservation and the balance of the fee must be paid on receipt of invoice **four weeks before** the date of commencement of the course.

If you cancel within the four week period there is no refund. If you postpone for a subsequent week there is a 50% charge of the fee.

It is recommended that you take out insurance to cover yourself for these eventualities.

Workshop hours are from **9.30 am to 5.00 pm** Monday to Thursday and **9.30 am to 3.30 pm** on Friday in order to tidy up the workshop and leave by **4.00 pm**.

We are closed over the weekend from 4.00pm on Friday to 9.30am on Monday.

Courses commence at **9.30am** on Monday. Tea and coffee are provided in the morning and afternoon breaks.

We break for lunch for one hour.

The booking form must be signed and returned together with your deposit/fee.

We reserve the right to change the terms and conditions at any time and to cancel courses. If we cancel the course for any reason we will issue a full refund of any monies paid.

Upholstery and related woodworking books which may be helpful

The Essential Guide to Upholstery by Dorothy Gates Published by Whitecap Books in 2000
ISBN 1-55285-080-3 £29.99

Practical Upholstery and the cutting of loose covers by Frederick Palmer first published in 1921 and now available through Herbert Press Ltd. ISBN 0 906969 48 4 £11.95

Practical Upholstery and the cutting of loose covers by Frederick Palmer. Published by The Guild of Master Craftsmen ISBN 1861081189 £25.00 First pub. 1990 Very informative - a lot of history and excellent drawings. Covers manufacturing side of Upholstery.

Upholstery Techniques and Projects by David James Published by The Guild of Master Craftsmen. Lots of projects but a bit light on the details of Upholstery - but useful for the person who is reasonably knowledgeable ISBN 0 946819 41 6 £18.95

The Upholsterers Pocket Reference Book by David James Excellent ISBN 0946819 718 £7.95

Upholstery A Practical Guide by Desmond Gaston A very clear, well illustrated book. Now out of print but occasionally available on Amazon. Well worth getting hold of if you can! ISBN 0 00 411671 2 Anywhere between £30.00 and £150.00

Collins Complete Woodworkers Manual by Jackson/Day For those planning to undertake extensive repairs to Furniture or who plan to make their own pieces this book is invaluable. It is beautifully illustrated and extremely well written. ISBN 000 4140052 £24.99

Care and Repair of Furniture by Jackson/Day This was originally a BBC paperback - now out of print. It is now in hardback - considerably updated and essential reading for anyone planning to restore woodwork on furniture ISBN 0004127307 £19.99

Accommodation while on our courses

We list these establishments purely for guidance only and they have not been approved by us. We welcome helpful comments from anyone staying at any of the accommodation listed.

Carmarthen Tourist Information Office Tel: 01267 231557

Kind Cottages Penbigwrn, Meidrim, St Clears, Carmarthenshire, SA33 5NY
Tel: +44(01994)230015 or 07779 344210 (located next door to workshop!)
Email: enquiries@kindcottage.co.uk URL: <http://www.kindcottage.co.uk>

Old Oak Barn self catering cottage Cwmpalis, St Clears, Carmarthenshire, SA33 4DS
Tel: +44(01994)230716 Email: info@oldoakbarn.co.uk

Dolau taf Apartment Dolau Taf Cross Inn Laugharne Carmarthenshire SA33 4QS
Tel: 01994 427087 Mobile: 07519106598
Email: peter.and.anne@btinternet.com

Glascoed Farm Bed & Breakfast Glascoed, St Clears, Carmarthenshire, SA33 4AY
Tel: +44(01994)231260 Email: Griffiths@blaengors.plus.com
URL: <http://www.carmarthenshirebedandbreakfast.com>

The Boat House Bed & Breakfast 1 Gosport Street, Laugharne, Carmarthen, SA33 4SY
Tel: +44(01994)427263 Email: theboathousebnb@yahoo.co.uk
URL: <http://www.theboathousebnb.co.uk>

Bronhaul Farm Cottages, Bronhaul, Bancyfelin, Carmarthen, Carmarthenshire, SA33 5NQ
Tel: 01267 211303 / 01267 211247 URL: www.bronhaulcottages.co.uk/the-farm

Llangarthginning Farm Llanboidy Road, Meidrim, Carmarthenshire, SA33 5QZ
Tel: 01994 230658
Email: valleyviewcottages@btconnect.com

Anfodd Holidays Blaenwaun, Carmarthenshire, SA34 OJN
Tel: 01994 448830
Email: anfodd1@btinternet.com URL: www.anfoddcountrysideretreats.co.uk

Quarry Lodge Camping White Mill, Carmarthen, SA32 7ET
Tel: 01267 290302 07976 101 404
Email: quarrylodgescamping@gmail.com URL: www.quarrylodgescamping.co.uk

TRADITIONAL UPHOLSTERY WORKSHOP RESERVATION FORM

Before completing please call Liz Marks on 07585 465528 to confirm availability.

We reserve the right to change the terms and conditions at any time and to cancel courses.

I would like to enrol in **week's course** price per week £420.00

Commencing

Name

Address

.....

.....

Phone

Total cost for course £

Payment may be made by Bank transfer to:

The Traditional Upholstery Workshop

Account No: 01383368 Sort Code: 30 91 68

Credit/Debit card by telephoning Liz on 07585 456528

Sterling cheque payable to 'The Traditional Upholstery Workshop'

I am enclosing a deposit non-refundable (£80.00 per student, per week) of £

or I am enclosing the total fee (The course being within 4 weeks from now) £

Type of furniture I will be bringing:

I agree to the terms and conditions.

Signed

Date