

**welters**<sup>®</sup>  
ORGANISATION  
WORLDWIDE  
Design and Innovation

*well designed*

*well built*

*well enjoyed*

**welters**<sup>®</sup>

**furniture**

a furniture manufacturing legacy

# welters® - a furniture making legacy

High Wycombe has a rich history in furniture making which began back in the 19th Century with the production of a wide array of designs and styles for Windsor chairs, making it the chair making capital of the world at the time.



Over the next hundred years, in addition to chairs, the industry evolved to include furniture manufacture, becoming the second largest furniture making town in the country.

## WELTERS OF WYCOMBE

Desider Frederick Welters (or Frederick, as he preferred to be called) established F.D. Welters Ltd in 1939 producing cabinet and upholstery work. The company soon established itself at the centre of the High Wycombe furniture manufacturing community, gaining a reputation for producing quality, hand-built furniture for both the domestic and corporate markets. This

quality was encapsulated in their elephant trademark for “reliability and strength”.



The company was heavily involved in the industry in general and played a part in the formation of the British Furniture Manufacturers' Federated Association and were also heavily involved with the Furniture Makers Guild.

During a recent trade skills visit to the British Furniture Manufacturers (BFM) offices in High Wycombe, Keith Welters (of FD Welters Ltd and grandson of Frederick) noticed a rather familiar chair in front of the MD's desk.

The chair was originally used by Keith's Grandfather and founder of FD Welters Ltd back in the 1960's who was at the time President of the then High Wycombe and District Furniture Manufacturers Society (now merged with the BFM). In fact the chair's embossed logo was designed by Keith himself when he was a young apprentice at the firm.

“I am absolutely delighted to see the chair again after all these years and in its most appropriate place” said Keith.



Over the decades F.D. Welters Ltd produced a range of styles to reflect the changing trends of consumers and the advances in manufacturing materials and techniques. The ranges covered reproduction 19th Century styles, Scandinavian designs and the 'contemporary' chic of the 1950's and 60's.

In addition to these style-driven designs, the company also supplied large contracts to institutions such as schools and government offices based on the Utility Furniture Scheme which specified the production of

strong well-designed but simple furniture in the tradition of the Arts and Crafts movement.

Although large scale furniture production has ceased at the company, there are many fine examples of high quality F.D. Welters Ltd furniture still in circulation around the world today and much coveted by collectors and style conscious consumers alike.



# WELTERS OF WYCOMBE

NOTE: ALL PRINTED PRICES INCREASED  
BY APPROXIMATELY 10% IN EACH 6!



*Contemporary or Traditional?*

**NO MATTER** which style you prefer, here is furniture to delight you, furniture built at High Wycombe, in the heart of the trade, by craftsmen proud of their work. Turn the pages of this booklet slowly. Study the designs carefully. Appreciate the solid "comfortableness" of the traditional, the grace and simplicity of the contemporary. Picture them in your own home.

Choice seasoned timber, hidden strength in construction, careful attention to the finer points, beautiful finish—all these things you can take for granted. The Welters' "Elephant" label is attached to nothing inferior, and you will be very welcome at our showrooms at High Wycombe, where you can see our complete range in the surroundings in which it is manufactured.

All Welters' furniture easily passes the British Standards Institute tests, and all pieces can be purchased individually. Look for the Welters' Elephant when you buy—and you will have made a purchase to last the rest of your life.

**F. D. WELTERS LTD.,** Lane End Road, Sands, High Wycombe, Bucks.  
Telephone: High Wycombe 2333.



**DINING ROOM  
FURNITURE  
1962**

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**DINING ROOM  
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1962**

**SHEET 2**

# WELTERS OF WYCOMBE

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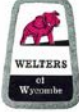
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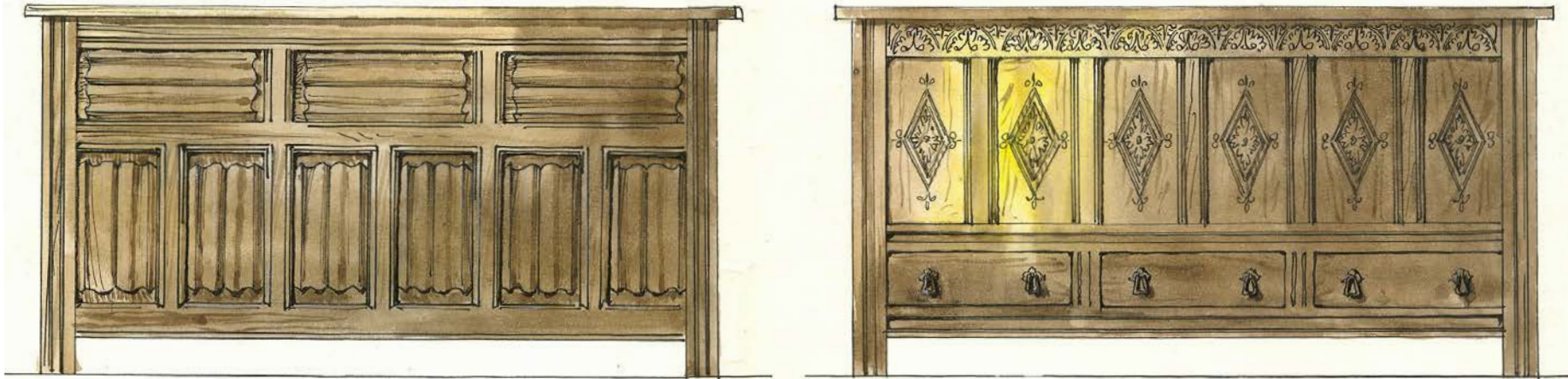
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**UPHOLSTERED  
FURNITURE  
1962**

**No. 377 ROCKER CHAIR**  
Back: Rubberised tuft on resilient rubber webbing.  
Seat: Resilient rubber webbing.  
Cushion: Moulded latex or moulded "Marleyfoam".  
Cover: Mousete or tapestry as selected.  
Retail price from £12 15 6 — "Marleyfoam"  
£13 7 6 — Latex





### *Contemporary or Traditional ?*

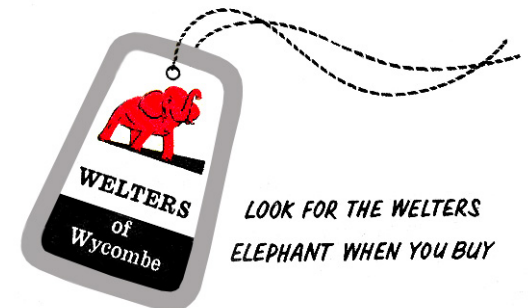
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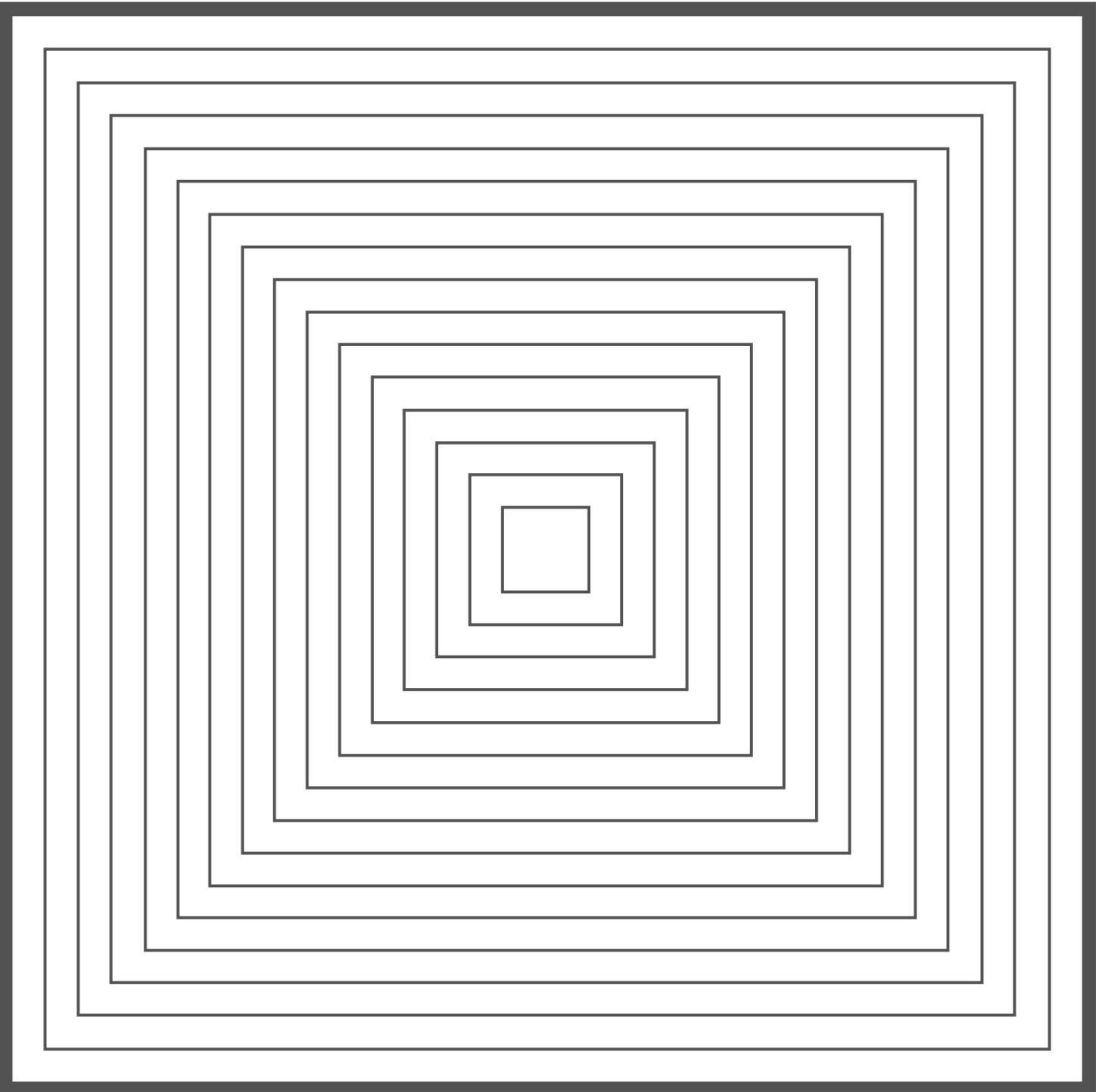
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**FURNITURE** by Welters of Wycombe has that air of good breeding that only results when very good design is coupled with the most painstaking attention to detail and quality. It is furniture that never grows old; furniture that throughout the whole of your life will remain a constant compliment to your own good taste. And the cost? You can certainly buy cheaper furniture if you wish, but you cannot buy better value for money.



**LOOK FOR THE WELTERS  
ELEPHANT WHEN YOU BUY**



welters®

[keith@welters-worldwide.com](mailto:keith@welters-worldwide.com)

# Keith Welters FURNISHING

Keith Welters, in 'the Sixties', designed and manufactured a breathtaking range of quality Furniture which was aligned directly toward the Domestic market. The beautiful furniture as created in Stainless steel, glass and Acrylic and the use of Polyurethane and Polypropylene was routine.



Until that time furniture designed in material other than timber was indeed rare with the



exception of office furniture, including steel filing cabinets and similar storage. The impact of the success of the iconic designed product by **welters**® into the Domestic market created an upsurge in demand for excellent design as opposed to the mundane in Office Furniture perception.



Keith Welters' furniture design innovation was featured in the 1968 edition of the Design Journal in the article entitled 'Transparently Beautiful'



**Transparently beautiful**  
Industry slumped. During the post-war period of great austerity a new application for acrylic sheet - then selling at highly uncompetitive prices - had to be found. ICI turned to lighting - first casings for long fluorescent tubes, which they had originally developed during the war, then shields and reflecting systems for street lighting - and finally, stemming from the development of opaque and coloured sheet, internally illuminated signs and fascia boards. With these, and above all the fast-rising, insatiable demand for Perspex, ICI can afford to spread its load and butter with a little jam. "We spend a frightening amount of money on research and development so we ought to come up with some winners," says Collins, although he emphasizes that his Sheet Development Group can achieve very little on its own, without industrial backing. He is also somewhat guarded in his reaction to designers. Despite a good deal of laudatory enthusiasm on the part of the profession - which exhibitions such as last year's Perspex at the RCA have done a lot to encourage - he still feels that designers are far too reluctant to convert themselves to experimentation which may not show immediate returns. He is undoubtedly right. Compared with Italy or the United States Keith Welters, who designs and markets a range of tables and chairs made from curved sheet, is clearly not helped by the disadvantages of acrylic as a furniture material although it is significant that neither the chair and nor the table top is actually made of Perspex. Welters chairs cost £20 each and the dining table costs approximately £25. The table setting is Eclair's Nova ware.  
our contribution is pathetically thin. This may stem from the fact that, as Peter Alan Turner says, acrylic sheet has "still got a bad name as a gimmick." Turner himself has recently prototyped one of the few really attractive pieces of acrylic furniture in this country - a table made up of a single sheet of 1/4 inch Perspex resting on a tubular steel frame. There are others, but he is one of the few established designers to be in hand of the material. The rest are chiefly specialists in one-off designs. These can be divided into the students, among whom David Colwell of the RCA stands out as one of the very few people in this country with the feel for acrylic sheet; sculptors, the Derek Boshier and Jack Horowitz; and the set designers, the Ralph Kautz, who secured a palpable hit last year with his airy Perspex scenery for the National Theatre's transvestite production of *La Fontaine*. Like any other material acrylic sheet has its disadvantages, but it is certainly not one of those which deter designers. It is scratchable, it attracts dust and generates static electricity, and its softening point is relatively low. Although it is difficult to score acrylic sheet deeply, shallow scratches are not easy to remove. Anti-static products help to the problem of static attraction. How does one prevent acrylic from melting? Manufacturers have tackled the problem by developing their own special grades and, as an alternative to the FM grade,

## EXTREMELY RARE! Vintage Keith Welters LUCITE CHAIR



Designed and manufactured by Keith Welters of High Wycombe, England, this item was featured in the 1968 Design Journal and referred to as "transparently beautiful."

This particular piece is in very good condition.

I have searched all over the internet and elsewhere but have not found a single record of a chair either being offered for sale or sold and that makes this one a rare find indeed!

|                           |                                   |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Price: <b>US \$295.00</b> | <a href="#">Buy it Now</a>        |
|                           | <a href="#">Add to cart</a>       |
| Best Offer:               | <a href="#">Make Offer</a>        |
| 3 watching                | <a href="#">Add to watch list</a> |
|                           | <a href="#">Add to collection</a> |
| <b>30-day returns</b>     | Longtime member                   |
|                           | Best offer available              |

Furniture by Keith Welters is sought after today by collectors worldwide

WOODWORKING CRAFTS

As a designer, my job and totally rewarding privilege is to find answers to questions.

Keith Welters

That statement is, of course, a gross over-simplification. What I really seek is vital and progressive solutions. The product could be sculpted with great skill from the only available piece of bog oak or produced by a developing manufacturing technique from an advanced man-made material. Both the material and method of production therefore will form together the eventual product. There are many aspects, obvious, but worth underlining. For example, the product needs its innovator and its manufacturer. The innovator and the craftsman may be one or the craftsman may interpret the concepts of the designer. In volume production the manufacturing organisation is required to produce the product competitively. Viability has to be established both in quality and cost. It is futile to spend 12 months producing a beautifully timber-engineered salad serving spoon when in three years a cathedral roof could be restructured by loving care, dedication and extreme skill.

# FUTURE FURNITURE

## The owner and the environment

One aspect often forgotten — the product needs an owner. Without one, the dreams of the designer never become reality. The concept may be sufficiently insensitive to be of no interest or they may be unaffordable. It has been reported that the administration of a significant design college in Britain held the bizarre view that to expose its students to commercial pressures would inhibit the process of education. In my submission the designer is totally ineffective, like a fish without water, if he is unable not only to survive but to thrive upon his environment. If he should hold a view that his relationships with owners and customers (his 'environment') constitute pressure, then he should change profession or submit to a more pertinent education.



## The outstanding omission

I have effectively been speaking about the plant and the flower without the seed. The seed is the 'question'. For me the most exciting part of all is to investigate a number of questions. The solutions develop through the design experience.

If we are to progress, the 'certain and relevant' aspects of the questions must be isolated from the 'uncertain and irrelevant'. For example, it is written that God said "Let there be light" and there was light, and also "Let there be darkness" and there was darkness. These writings through distance are difficult to analyse and yet the question of light and darkness is no longer consciously debated. Countless designers work away developing sunlamps, sunglasses, tinted windows and on the other hand controllable lighting systems.

Our awareness of light and darkness is real, but the world changes daily. We need to be aware of the wide-ranging and ever-increasing format for our questions. Jimmy Saville, for example, purports this is the age of the train! A definitive statement, but however a parvolet the rail network, the statement raises questions. A pilot may well contend this is the 'age of flight' and so on.

Nobody contests mechanised transportation systems are part of our lives. We all have them and use them, although we have different designs and styles and different methods of using them.

It is a recent innovation for architects to consider the place to put the car as an integral part of building design. For many years, buildings were built with no regard to this. A simple example of designers not asking the correct questions at the appropriate time.

## The Future

The past and the present connect with our lives today, but what of the future?

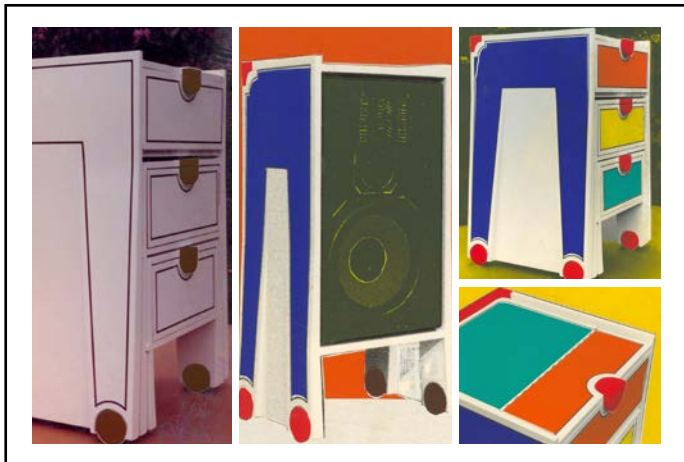
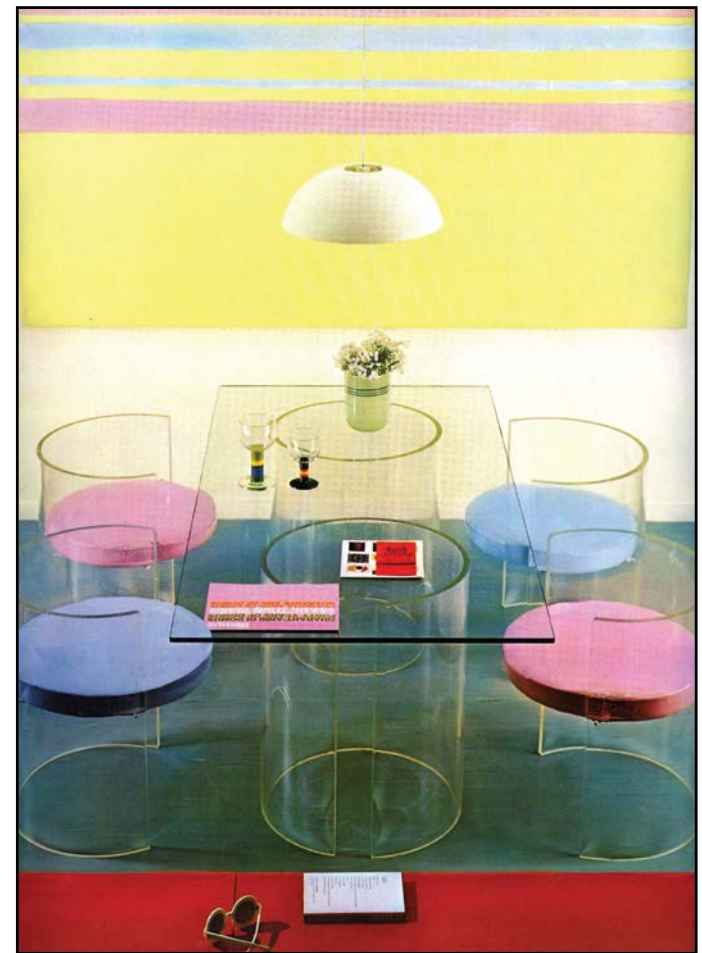
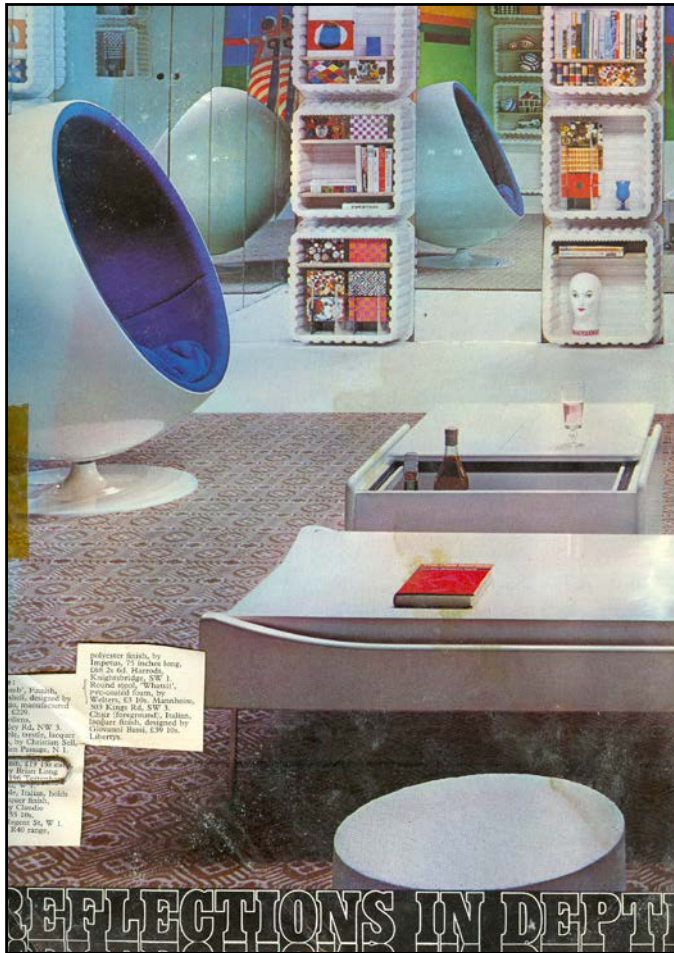
I have no intention of now exploring high technology. Only what I consider to be relevant in the marriage of artifice of high technology with our everyday lives and domestic environment. I can recall the evolution of the telephone seat. The need seemed to be justified. Questions were asked as many people had

telephones. What do they do with it? Where do they put it? At that time, no thought had been given to the location of this intertidal device. It would find itself in the most unfortunate locations, usually interfering with the organised activity of the household, it would be 'fallen over' or the user would be trodden underfoot in a passage between the kitchen and the toilet.

Hence for some, a degree of order emerged. The telephone seat became an item of furniture and had its place in the home. Today we use the telephone in a completely different manner. Many of us need one in nearly every room. Once again, without careful thought, we will become engulfed in a maze of confusion and these instruments destroy the beauty and order of our furniture and furnishings.

British Telecom advise us that they have systems limited only by our imagination. It is again possible to isolate known and accepted facts from the question that is being raised by the emphatic statement. We must control, harness and organise the technology that now surrounds us before our homes are converted into something which might well resemble 'Sepotoc's backyard'.

The designer would have no problem in taking a clean sheet at



**RW 56**

The RW 56 chair system combines finely upholstered fiberglass units, elegant design and robust construction. The upholstered unit, when mounted on one of the hand-built tubular chrome underframes, will fulfil your contract, office or domestic requirements.

**RW 56**

**VC 56**

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**Welters**

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**GONDOLA** DESIGNING & REVOLUTION

**Welters**



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Extract from *Woodworker Craft* 1963

## New furniture: the domestic market

Rationalisation and new techniques are gradually transforming Britain's furniture industry. **Margaret Duckett** analyses its current condition.

"The British furniture industry is neolithic, like a dinosaur: 60 feet long with a brain the size of a teacup." Sir Gordon Russell is not alone in holding this recently-expressed opinion. Ken Fullalove, Meredew sales manager, reckons the industry is basically backward, particularly in marketing. Leslie Julius, managing director of Hille, expounds a kinder view. "The industry is in a tremendous state of flux. The profit margins are not wide enough for firms to plough back funds into development and research. There is a need for rationalisation; this is happening, but only slowly."

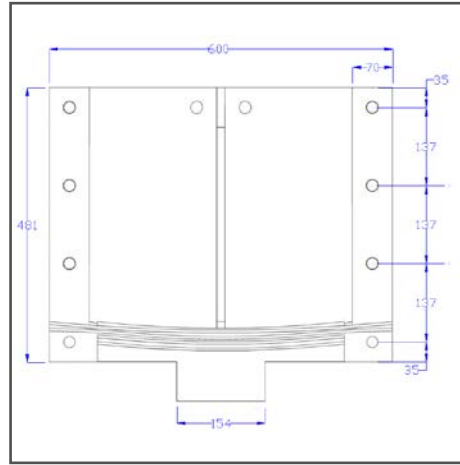
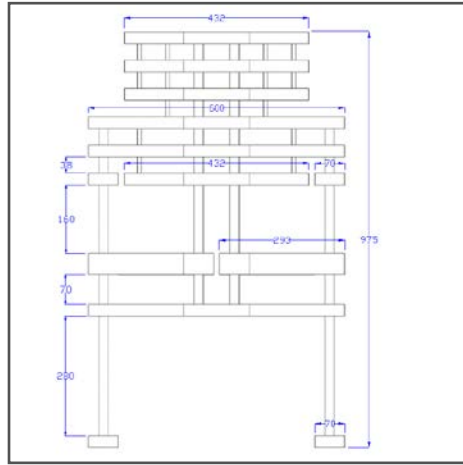
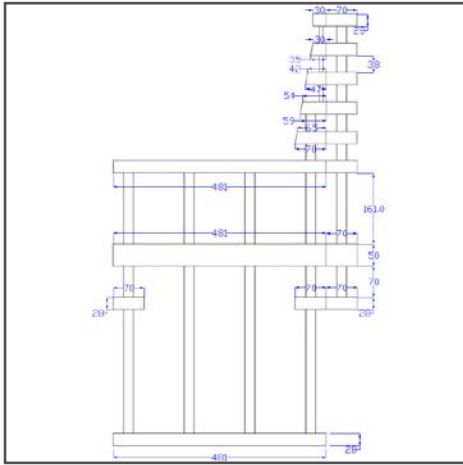
Rationalisation involves rapid changes. Within the last ten years, the "dinosaur" has shrunk by half, leaving about 1,650 firms. The tendency of firms to become either more giant-like and automated, or smaller and design-conscious in a more specialist and innovatory way, seems likely to continue.

New furniture concepts have for some time been initiated mainly by small pacesetter firms, like Hille, OMK, Datum, Keith Welters, Design Progression, Peter Hoyte, Merrow Associates, or by architects like Farrell/Grimshaw, working in the contract field, or by freelance designers who subcontract the manufacturing. Watered down versions of their forms are emulated a safe year or two later by large firms, who usually manage to price cut. Domino solid foam chairs covered in shiny PVC covers, introduced last year by Beauvale Furnishings, are undoubtedly based on the cube armchairs designed by Willy Landels two years before. A Domino chair retails at £271.95 whereas David Bishop initially sold Landels's chairs at £591.00 each. A copy which improves on the original would be worth stomaching, but it is a rare occurrence. Beauvale's chairs,

for example, have seat cushions of a colour and texture different to that of the frame, which completely destroys the total gleaming chunkiness of Landels's original cube. In fairness to the unadventurous giant firms, they are not economically geared to take risks; high investment in equipment has to be paid off by safe long runs. But why have so few large firms followed Meredew's example: using mediocre bulk production to underpin small experimental ranges? Many small progressive firms get round the problem by running essentially as design marketing-assembly operations. Most of their manufacturing is subcontracted to specialists like HIA Plastics (chair shells), S. Greenan (plastics draws), Plastic Coatings of Guildford, or suppliers like Bridge of Weir (leather) or Aerofoam (cushions). Transporting components between subcontractors is expensive, but this system allows firms to change designs frequently without risking investment in machinery. John Massey, a Furniture Industry Research Association spokesman, predicts that the furniture industry will eventually become purely an assembly-marketing one, using components made entirely by other industries. This tendency is particularly noticeable where plastics are concerned; the expensive machinery involved has to be kept busy. GKN Plastics, for instance, who are at present cooperating with Guy Rogers in the making of Sombbrero, a rotationally moulded polyethylene chair designed by George Fejer, would expect to mould chair shells one day and dolls' heads or buckets the next.

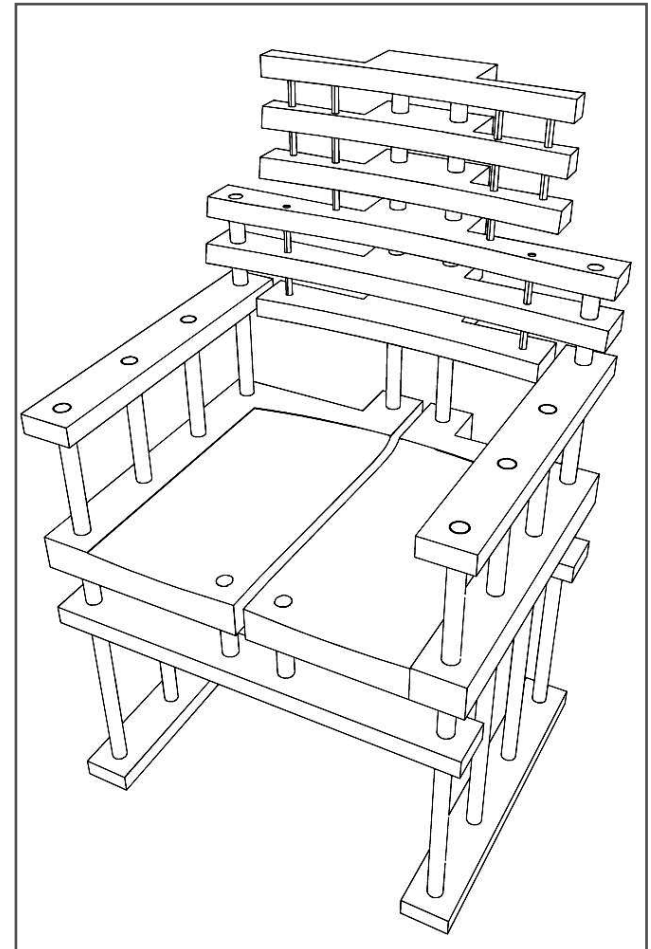
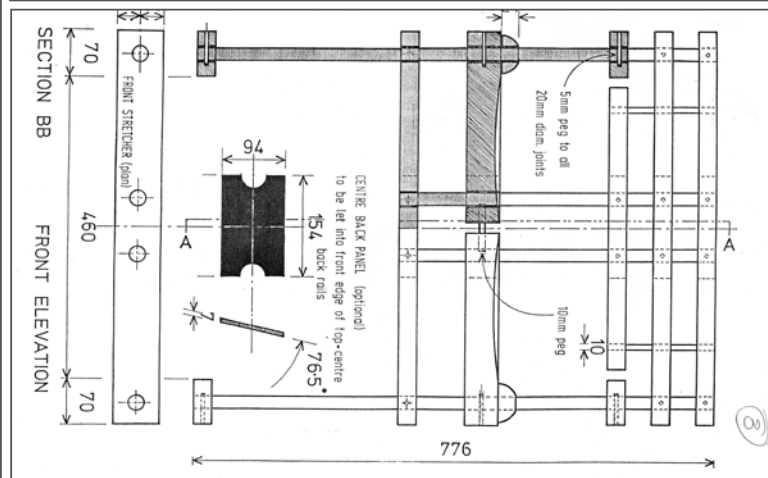
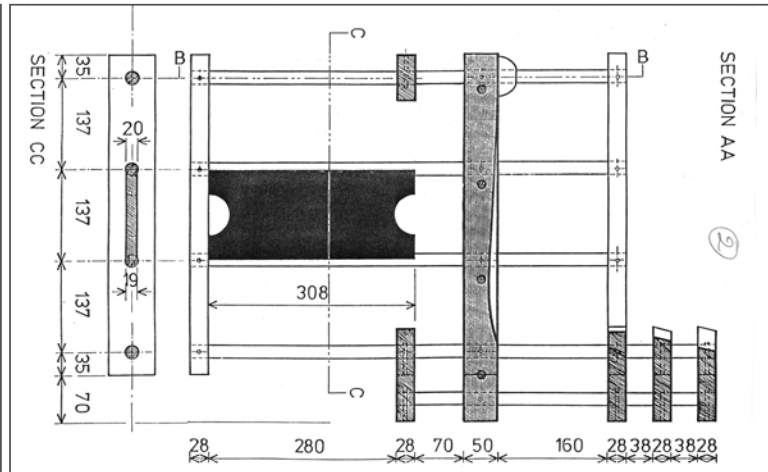
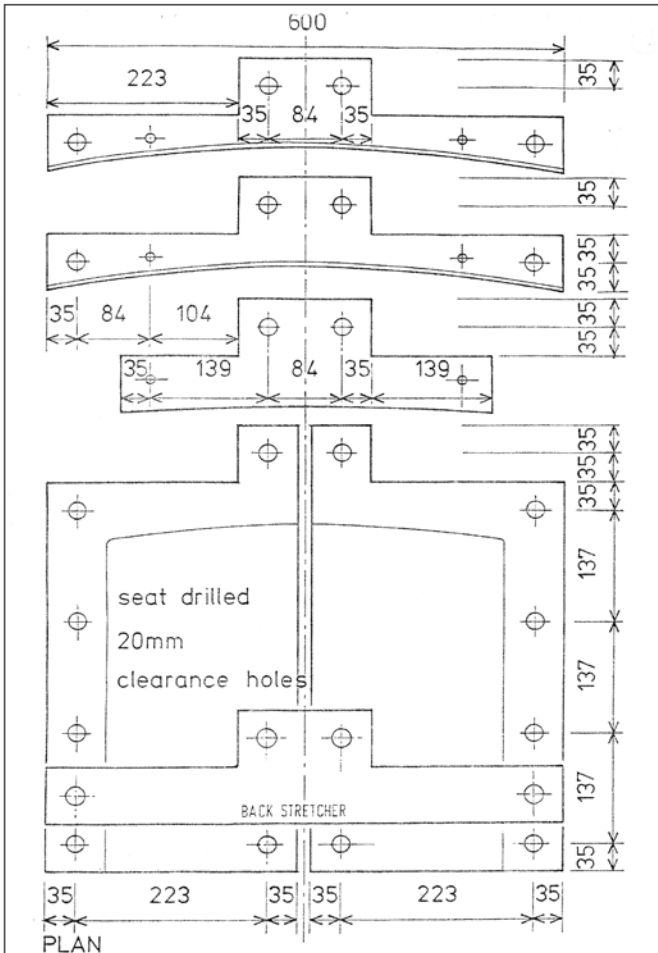
Although still geared to wood as a basic material, the industry is now well aware of the realities of the plastics age. "Unless we use plastics and the new techniques offered, we will disappear like the blacksmiths who refused to become motor mechanics," says Stanley Little, director of Guy Rogers. His belief is that big chemical industries like ICI and Shell will only contentedly remain suppliers of raw materials - and not go into manufacturing themselves - as long as the furniture industry buys and uses the materials: a point later confirmed by a spokesman from ICI research department...

Extract from *Design Journal* article 1968



# welters® Windsor Chair

In tribute to its High Wycombe roots, the company is celebrating its return to the 'of the moment' Windsor Chair production through the innovative interpretation of manufacturing styles and materials in a comprehensive and all embracing range of furniture elements.



# FURNITURE FUTURE

The continuing popularity of the furniture has been the inspiration for Keith Welters, a third generation City of London Freeman and Liveryman to reintroduce the original company name and to come full circle, linking the heritage of the past to the innovations of the present.

Retro furniture still looks fantastic in a modern home and it is a trend that is becoming very popular amongst style

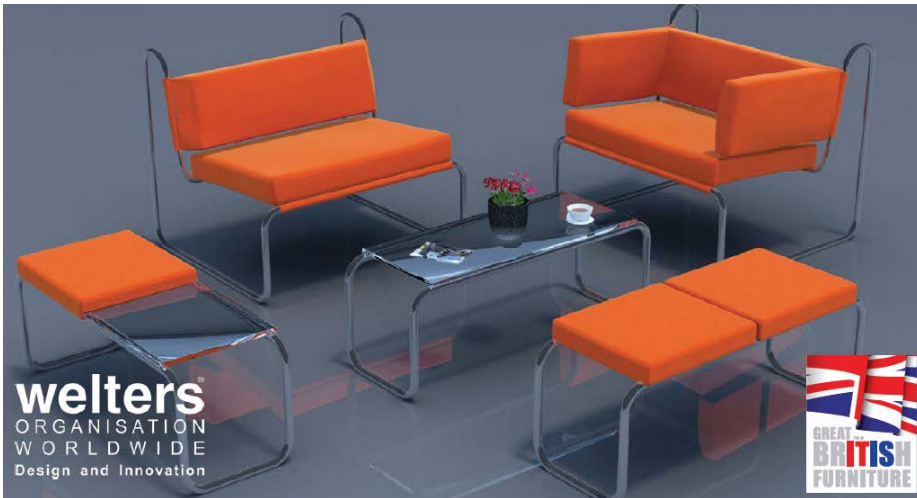
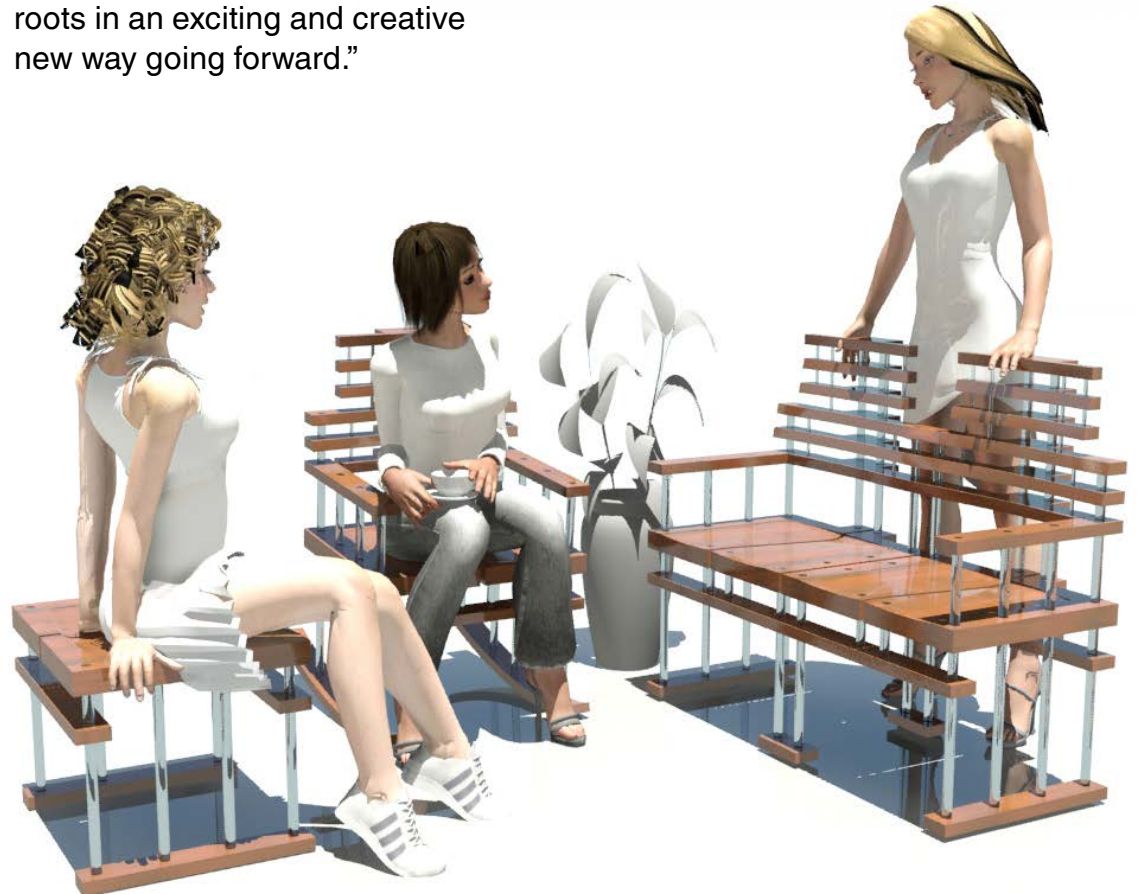
conscious interior designers who are rediscovering the classic designs of the past. Combining modern and retro pieces can create beautiful new aesthetics in home decoration which has not gone unnoticed at **welters**® HQ.

As an established furniture designer and manufacturer throughout past eras, the **welters**® furniture back-catalogue clearly illustrates the highly skilled craftsmanship and contemporary design that really captured the mood of the time. **welters**® are now revisiting selected pieces of this classic furniture. There will be some great new designs, as well as some fantastic pieces from the

past . Modern and retro going hand in hand.

Keith said “We have put F.D. Welters Ltd back as the foundation upon which Welters Organisation Worldwide will operate as a trade name for part of our existing activities.

“The F.D. Welters Ltd legacy will be reintroduced and we want to build upon our furniture making roots in an exciting and creative new way going forward.”





**welters**<sup>®</sup>  
ORGANISATION  
WORLDWIDE  
Design and Innovation

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