



This item was submitted to Loughborough's Institutional Repository (<https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/>) by the author and is made available under the following Creative Commons Licence conditions.

  
C O M M O N S D E E D

**Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 2.5**

**You are free:**

- to copy, distribute, display, and perform the work

**Under the following conditions:**



**Attribution.** You must attribute the work in the manner specified by the author or licensor.



**Noncommercial.** You may not use this work for commercial purposes.



**No Derivative Works.** You may not alter, transform, or build upon this work.

- For any reuse or distribution, you must make clear to others the license terms of this work.
- Any of these conditions can be waived if you get permission from the copyright holder.

**Your fair use and other rights are in no way affected by the above.**

This is a human-readable summary of the [Legal Code \(the full license\)](#).

[Disclaimer](#) 

For the full text of this licence, please go to:  
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/>

Tottenham Court Road: The changing fortunes of London's furniture street 1850-1950.

“Tottenham Court Road skirts Bloomsbury on the W., is a long, bustling, and somewhat Philistine street, noted for its furniture-dealers”. (Findlay Muirhead, *London and its Environs*, London, Macmillan 1918, p. 173)

Tottenham Court Road has been associated with the furniture business since the eighteenth century. It had its heyday between 1850 and 1950 and has had something of a renaissance in recent years. This paper considers the furniture business in this street in central London through a mix of retail business history and urban geography. The paper will attempt to understand why this particular ‘furniture street’ developed as it did. Considerations of the networks or clusters of businesses associated with furniture making assist the analysis. The paper will also consider the nature of the furniture industry and trade in the immediate area and the history of particular stores in the street as exemplars of the processes examined, and discuss why critics denigrated the street for its (apparently) poor design. In some cases, design reformers and novelists used Tottenham Court Road as a generic term of contempt for (apparently) cheap and nasty goods. Despite this, the street became successfully synonymous with the London retail furniture trade for well over a century. Writing in 1930, Beresford Chancellor explained:

What to the majority of people does the Tottenham Court Road connote ...? It connotes, unless I am very much mistaken, a long and not very attractive thoroughfare, lined with many small shops of quiet indifferent character, among which, however, rise here and there, *rari nantes* in the *gurgite vasto* of

the commonplace, those giant headquarters of commercial activity, such as the emporia of Messrs. Maples & Co., Messrs Shoolbred and Co., and Messrs. Heal & Son. The presence of these world-renowned centres attracts to the Tottenham Court Road those who would otherwise in all probability never enter or pass through it, and it has given it its now recognised title of the Furnishing Street of London.<sup>1</sup>

### **Clustering and co-location factors**

There has long been a tradition of particular trades clustering in a street or specific site. London's well-known examples have included Clerkenwell for clocks, Spitalfields for silk, Savile Row for tailoring, Charing Cross Road for booksellers and Tottenham Court Road for furniture.<sup>2</sup> The reasons for this practice are not hard to find.

Over the last sixty years, the four fundamentals of central place theory, spatial interaction, the principle of minimum differentiation, and bid-rent theory have underpinned much analysis of clustering and business location, especially in the retail sector.<sup>3</sup> As economist, Alfred Marshall explained in 1919 with regard to retail clusters:

But there is also the convenience of the customer to be considered. He will go to the nearest shop for a trifling purchase; but for an important purchase he will take the trouble of visiting any part of the town where he knows that there are specially good shops for his purpose. Consequently shops which deal in expensive and choice objects tend to congregate together; and those which supply ordinary domestic needs do not.<sup>4</sup>

However, the Tottenham Court Road area was much more than a retail location. It was a business district in its own right.

More broadly, firms have tended to cluster in particular locations to take account of the increasing rewards associated with the economies of agglomeration within a finite spatial limit. For these districts to develop, there needs to be a set of orientations that are favourable to their development. These orientations may include supplies of materials or finished goods, space, transport, labour, and, of course, a market. Therefore, certain locations were clearly better placed than others to ‘deliver’ the goods. In other words, there developed a community of traders in these locations who had a mutually beneficial relationship through production and distribution.

The economies of agglomeration describe the benefits that firms obtain when locating near to one another.<sup>5</sup> They relate to the idea of economies of scale and network effects, in that the more related firms that cluster together, the greater the market into which the firms can sell. Even when multiple firms in the same sector (competitors) cluster, there are advantages in that the cluster attracts more suppliers and customers than a single firm could alone.<sup>6</sup>

The features of spatial clustering, and agglomeration found in the Tottenham Court Road area are common to this type of district where input suppliers, output vendors (retailers) and customers are all accessible in the same area. In these cases, clusters of suppliers will deliver differentiated and distance sensitive products to a group of input-buying firms (retailers).<sup>7</sup>

A useful way of considering the dynamics of industrial districts or clusters is in terms of evolutionary characteristics. There are ranges of models but they all follow the basic path of emergence, growth, and stagnation or adaptation.<sup>8</sup> Swann’s cluster lifecycle model is the one I use here.<sup>9</sup> Essentially this has four components. The first

is the idea of critical mass – the clustering of expertise, factors of production and markets. Second is the take off period where key innovations, locations and expansions, transport factors, civic groups, major players, expansion and division into high-class work etc are developed. Thirdly is the peak entry where the costs of clustering start to outweigh benefits, the rate of growth falls, external competition consolidates and develops. Finally, there is the saturation point - where rivals offer superior advantages, and decline gradually sets in. There is of course an opportunity of the cluster to re-invent itself to re-start the process. These stages will be identified in the paper, but first some context to explain the background to the developments is necessary.

### **London's furniture industry**

Paul Johnson has shown how the modern economy developed in London in particular ways during the nineteenth century. It was large in scale, with a growing demand and an increasing supply of the factors of production to meet it. The transport system and the infrastructure made for easy information flow and there was a fully monetized economy, so financial incentives were strong.<sup>10</sup>

Ball and Sunderland have pointed out that 'agglomeration economies, changes in markets and production processes, transportation developments and state regulation' all influenced and changed industries in London.<sup>11</sup> Daunton has also suggested that London's industrial districts 'may be considered as communities of skills which brought together interdependent workmen with different expertise'.<sup>12</sup> The concepts of flexible specialisation and the circulation of information between parts of the market linked these communities. Furniture manufacture and supply was no exception.

The English furniture industry at the beginning of the nineteenth century was similar in many respects to the eighteenth century trade. Four divisions typified the industry at the turn of the eighteenth century. These were independent working masters, craftsmen-shopkeepers, businesses combining manufacturing and selling, and retailers. There was a centre of trade based in London; with the various trades divided and sub-divided to provide groups of specialists in any particular production field.<sup>13</sup> These divisions in the trade organisation continued and developed in the nineteenth century and have been subsequently analysed in various ways. In one of the great contemporary studies of nineteenth century industry, George Dodd, writing in the mid-century, described the specific nature of the furniture business as follows: ‘The tables, the chairs, [etc] all are made to a vast extent in London, but not generally in large factories: they are the production of tradesmen, each of whom can carry on a tolerably extensive business without great extent of room, or a large number of workmen’.<sup>14</sup> Although there were some large enterprises, this was a fair summation.

However, Henry Mayhew’s observations in 1849-50 created his well-known classification between the so-called “honourable” and “dishonourable” parts of the trade.<sup>15</sup> This drew another distinction between skilled workers employed by high-class establishments and paid in accord with trade society rates or above and the other extreme of ‘sweated labour’ and poor quality outputs.

More recently, Hall identified furniture makers as polarized between the high class West End bespoke, the high-class ready-made and the East End cheaper ready-made trade.<sup>16</sup> Pat Kirkham has particularly labelled the high class bespoke and ready-made traders as the “comprehensive manufacturing firm”, notable for bringing all the main crafts under one roof.<sup>17</sup> This form of organisation was limited to the honourable part of the trade and based on the general principle of complete house furnishing to

order, rather than producing furniture for retail sale. The majority of its productions would have been specials for private customers and most of these showrooms and workshops had West End locations. This area included Soho, New Bond Street, Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road. Henry Mayhew, writing in 1861, gave a flavour the nature of the honourable crafts in this area:

Those who wish to be impressed with the social advantages of a fairly-paid class of mechanics should attend a meeting of the Woodcarvers' Society. On the first floor of a small private house in Tottenham-street, Tottenham court-road, is, so to speak, the museum of the working-men belonging to this branch of the cabinet-makers. The walls of the back-room are hung round with plaster casts of some of the choicest specimens of the arts, and in the front room the table is strewn with volumes of valuable prints and drawings in connexion with the craft. Round this table are ranged the members of the society - some forty or fifty were there on the night of my attendance - discussing the affairs of the trade.<sup>18</sup>

In contrast, the East End was generally known for the 'garret-masters' who worked in cramped conditions, often producing basic and often repetitive work speculatively.<sup>19</sup> This 'dishonourable' part of the trade operated in the East End of London where the 'sweating system' took advantage of self-employed cabinetmakers and pushed down the possibility of quality work by price pressure, lack of training and fierce competition. Mayhew explained that these were 'those who make up goods for the trade on the smallest amount of capital, and generally on speculation'.<sup>20</sup> This part of the trade was particularly associated with the Curtain Road (E.C.2), Hoxton, Bethnal Green (E.2) and Finsbury (E.C.1.) areas<sup>21</sup>

Furniture making was clearly an important and growing industry in the capital during the nineteenth century. In 1841, it employed 20,000 workers, but by 1911, this figure had risen to nearly 67,000.<sup>22</sup>

The concomitant growth in demand, especially during the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, ensured a ready market for the industry's products. This 'take-off' period was clearly assisted by the phenomenal growth of London's population that increased demand, but other factors including a developing commercial infrastructure, better credit facilities and their wider availability, as well as the development of retail emporia all assisted the growth process. The Tottenham Court Road area demonstrates these features.

### **Furniture supply in Tottenham Court Road and environs**

The areas around (and including) Tottenham Court Road had a unique position within this structure. Charles Booth's *Life and Labour of the People of London* clearly recognised this. He noted that 'Midway between the East End and West End systems and combining some features of each, are what are termed trade or piecemasters' shops. The district adjoining Tottenham Court Road is the chief seat of this class of establishment'.<sup>23</sup> Oliver has shown how the manufacturing trade in the area developed in the period 1801-1872 and then declined.

**Fig 1. Furniture making establishments in the Tottenham Court Road area 1801-1911<sup>24</sup>**

	1801	1811	1846	1859	1872	1911
Berners St.	-	-	3	13	13	9
Oxford St.	4	3	12	34	24	18



Charlotte Street.	1	3	7	12	14	3
Cleveland Street	-	-	4	2	10	
Tottenham Court Road	-	2	8	9	25	22

As if in compensation, furniture businesses in the area around St Pancras (NW1) developed to service the area.

**Fig 2. Furniture making establishments in St. Pancras area 1846-1911.**

1846	1859	1872	1911
40	54	63	124

This position was not a sudden development. By the mid-eighteenth century, furniture suppliers had established themselves in the area. As early as 1752 the important cabinet-maker and supplier, Matthias Lock moved from Long Acre to live and work ‘near the Swan, Tottenham Court Road’.<sup>25</sup> In 1759 another well-known maker, Pierre Langlois was in business at 39 Tottenham Court Road remaining there until at least 1781.<sup>26</sup> From 1785, François Hervé worked as a cabriole chair maker at 32 Johns Street (now Whitfield Street) Tottenham Court Road.<sup>27</sup> The important Swedish cabinetmaker Christopher Fuhrloh described as ‘Ebeniste to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales’ also had a workshop at 24 Tottenham Court Road between c. 1769 and 1784.<sup>28</sup> The fashionable carver and gilder, Peter Bogaert worked

in Tottenham Court Road in 1792.<sup>29</sup> The Tottenham Court Road locality continued to be a draw for immigrants as well as the artistic community.<sup>30</sup>

From the early nineteenth century, retail furnishers began to establish themselves in the locality. This encouraged further cabinetmakers and upholsterers to establish their workshops in the Tottenham Court Road area, so they became part of a contracting system that worked in conjunction with the stores in the area. It is no coincidence that four of the most well-known English furnishing stores were established in this street within ten years of one another; Hewetson<sup>31</sup> by 1838, Heal in 1839, Maple in 1842 and Oetzmann<sup>32</sup> in 1848.

Apart from local sources of supply, the retailers benefitted from developments in infrastructure. In 1818, the Tottenham Court Road was equipped with street lighting, which must have had a beneficial effect on business. The Regents Canal passed nearby so this was useful for timber deliveries.<sup>33</sup> By the mid century, a transport infrastructure included buses that used the street as a thoroughfare, and useful rail links. The Euston mainline terminus and the Metropolitan line underground stations were close by. It was at this stage that a critical mass was established.

The growth of the area is reflected in Tallis's comments when he wrote in 1839 that Tottenham Court Road was '25 years back (i.e.1813) almost the least busiest thoroughfare-and now there is as much and more trade done in it than in any other street in the metropolis.'<sup>34</sup> An indication of the expansion of industry in the area is found in 1861 when there were 5252 employed in the furniture trade in the St Marylebone and St Pancras Metropolitan Boroughs, which accounted for over 20 percent of the Greater London figure.<sup>35</sup>

The factors that encouraged agglomeration in the area included relatively low rents, a transport network, a supply of skilled labour and a location that was central

for both the manufacturing and supply functions. Indeed, whilst much of the manufacturing was based in relatively small local premises, the makers were able to maintain a competitive edge. In addition, it is important to note that an important source of supply, the East End, was only 2.5 miles away to the east.

### **Tottenham Court Road itself**

On looking at the map of central London, it is clear that Tottenham Court Road is located in a prime or central place within the retail arena. The centrality supports the distance that consumers are prepared to travel to acquire goods, and since furniture is a durable, valuable and variable product, it is apparent that people were willing to travel longer distances to acquire it.<sup>36</sup> Tottenham Court Road thus exemplifies the relationship between supply and demand, transportation, and a geographical space.

Trade directories for 1839 record nine businesses associated with furniture making and selling on the west side of the street, and nineteen on the east: by 1841, this had risen to fourteen on the west and twenty-three on the east. (See Fig. 3) Interestingly, the new arrivals demonstrated the increase in production facilities as they included a leather wholesaler, a saw and toolmaker, a furnishing ironmonger, and a varnish manufacturer.

Although the principle streets for furniture making and supply in the West End of London in 1802 were mainly situated south of Oxford Street, by 1872 they were mainly in the north, in for example, such streets as Windmill Street, Cleveland Street and Charlotte Street. In Charlotte Street, there were thirteen cabinetmakers, one chair maker, and a number of mahogany and veneer merchants nearby.<sup>37</sup> The important point here is that this identifies the Tottenham Court Road as a locational axis for these businesses and links to Swann's 'take off' period.

Nevertheless, the reputation of the street had still not reached its peak. In 1873, the *House Furnisher* remarked upon the entry of Shoolbred into the furniture trade.<sup>38</sup> It noted that: ‘there is room, ample and to spare, for all fair and honest traders; and although it may be long before the Tottenham Court Road rivals New Bond and Oxford Street, we may hope yet to see the locality redeemed from being a by-word among streets.’<sup>39</sup>

The 1882 London street directory lists 34 businesses in Tottenham Court Road associated with home furnishings. (See Fig. 3) These include sixteen retailers and various cabinet-makers, upholsterers, drapers and warehousemen. There is a pronounced agglomeration on the East side of the street, the reason for which is not immediately obvious. By 1915, the retailers were pre-eminent with twenty businesses recorded with only six suppliers’ businesses listed in the street. Also established around this time were the important furnishing businesses of Catesby<sup>40</sup>, and Wolfe and Hollander<sup>41</sup>. (See Fig. 3)

The following three case studies of the most famous of the Tottenham Court Road furniture businesses will demonstrate aspects of this development.

#### *Maple and Co.*

The best example of a successful enterprise was the Maple business. This was a ‘classic’ development. In 1841, John Maple, a 26 year old who had had an apprenticeship in shop keeping, acquired a draper’s shop in partnership with James Cook at 145 Tottenham Court Road. Eight months later, they purchased the shop of an upholsterer next door at number 147 and the business started selling furniture. In 1851, the partners dissolved the partnership. Maple redeveloped the original site with a unified frontage. Success bred success and by the late 1850s, the firm had ‘traded-

up' from a small local shop to a fashionable emporium. It was in this decade that the firm developed its own manufacturing base. Maple had shrewdly realised that control over his supply of merchandise, whether it was the higher class goods made in his own workshops<sup>42</sup> or the 'slop goods' bought from local or East End suppliers, was crucial to success. One further example of integration was his development of his own timber yards. In a retrospective commentary on Maples, written in 1903, a correspondent in *The Times* noted:

Fifty years ago the shop was not to be distinguished from the ordinary "goods on the pavement" type which was at that time common in the Tottenham Court Road; and it remained open 'til 9 o'clock, doing much of its business with small people who came to buy household furniture after their own shops were closed. Somehow or other, John Maple the elder gradually came to secure some richer customers, and early in the sixties he has contrived to enlarge his borders to make business well known by advertisement and to take his place as one of the leaders of the new commercial movement-the movement for big shops where the owner of a house, however large or small could come and find all the furniture he wanted on the premises.<sup>43</sup>

The firm went from strength to strength, building its business particularly in contract furnishings for the hotel and club business, as well as supplying embassies and officers' messes. They also furnished goods and services to the British royal family and many of the crowned heads of Europe, as well as the King of Siam and the Sultan of Zanzibar. They opened a store in Paris c. 1885 and another in Buenos Aires in 1909, and extended their own manufacturing capabilities. By the end of the century, they had factories located locally in Beaumont Place (Tottenham Court Road),

Midford Place, (Tottenham Court Road), Frederick Street (off Hampstead Road), and Southampton Court (off Queens Square).

By the 1880s, they employed over 2,000 staff, including 1,295 in the factories, and 365 salesmen and clerks, as well as 391 girls.<sup>44</sup> The store itself was impressive. Percy Russell wrote in 1874 '[Maples is] a kind of vast exhibition extending in all directions, closely but artistically packed with every description of furniture'.<sup>45</sup>

Twenty years later the *Illustrated London News* demonstrated the vast size of the Maples site.

[The shop] has been amplified, extended and increased till it has developed into the handsome blocks of buildings whose ruddy tones give colour and warmth to the northern end of Tottenham Court Road, and then returning occupy the whole of the north and south sides of both Tottenham Place and Southampton Court reappearing in the Euston Road, with the grand new red-brick elevation extending from Beaumont Place onward...while there are also, besides the great yards, where huge stacks of timber are ripening for use, numerous great factories and workshops fitted up with every modern labour-saving appliance.<sup>46</sup>

One of the downsides of the powerful positions held by the large stores in Tottenham Court Road was the possible abuse of this power in relation to their suppliers. Maples were particularly identified with the practice of 'sweating', whereby they set off sub-contracted makers (often from the East End) with one another, and even with their own workshops, to push down prices. The Select Committee into the Sweating System, 1888, investigated a whole range of traders, including the directors of Maple and Co., in which this and similar practices apparently occurred, but they were inconclusive in their final report.<sup>47</sup>

John Maple's evidence given to the Select Committee on the Sweating System of 1888, described how his firm had developed partly by absorbing the small single-man operation and bringing them under one roof:

We have in our firm stuffers, mattress makers, upholsterers, blind makers and loose case cutters. All those duties used to be carried on by one man in a small house, now they are carried on as separate departments and it is really for the benefit of the consumer and for the benefit of the working people themselves.<sup>48</sup>

He continued his evidence with facts and figures about his business which showed that at that time he employed over 2,000 hands and ran an enormous timber yard,<sup>49</sup> however, other evidence showed him to be an exploiter of the "sweating system".<sup>50</sup> Allegations included the notion that Maple took advantage of the need for the individual maker to sell one object before he could make another. This knocked down the price to Maple's advantage.

This episode had little long-term effect on the business so that during the twentieth century, Maples continued in the same vein, often with an emphasis on contract work on the one hand, and attempting to meet the demands of a changing retail market on the other, until the Tottenham Court Road premises were bombed in 1940 and then destroyed in 1941. It was to be eighteen years before they fully reopened in 1959.

#### *James Shoolbred & Co.*

Another example of successful development was the company founded by James Shoolbred.<sup>51</sup> Having established his drapery business at 155 Tottenham Court Road in 1817, he purchased the adjacent properties, 154, and 156 in 1835, and then built a new

shop called “Tottenham House”. By 1838, directories defined the business as ‘linen and woollen draper, silk, mercers, haberdashers and carpet warehousemen.’ Further property purchases occurred in 1842, and between 1847 and 1861, with the aim of creating an island site. The press noticed this growth. *The British Metropolis* of 1851 noted ‘the exhibition of linen drapery, silks, &c.; also carpets and furniture. This is the largest retail establishment in London, and occupies a great number of houses, now made into one extensive warehouse and showrooms.’<sup>52</sup>

These stores were becoming attractions in their own right. George Pardon in his *Popular Guide To London* (1862) wrote that although there was ‘little of note’ in Tottenham Court Road, he singled out that ‘near the junction of the Tottenham Court Road with the Euston, Hampstead and Marylebone roads is the famous drapery establishment of Messrs. Shoolbred, one of the largest and best in the metropolis’.<sup>53</sup> Examples from popular fiction that mention the store in a manner that suggests familiarity to the readers include Thackeray’s passage: “His artless wife and mine were conversing at that moment upon the respective merits of some sweet chintzes which they had seen at Shoolbred’s, in Tottenham Court Road, and which were so cheap and pleasant, and lively to look at!”<sup>54</sup> James Burn, writing in 1858, commented upon the economic ‘pulling power’ of Tottenham Court Road and Shoolbred in particular:

To men who are acquainted with the business localities of our large provincial towns, it would be out of the question for them to imagine that the most gigantic retail establishment either in this country or any other should be found in the apparently out-of-the-way place in which Shoolbred and Co’s stands. Tottenham-Court-Road is certainly no mean thoroughfare, either in its length, breadth, or the amount of business transacted in it. But if the commerce of the



street was simply confined to this one house, we should say that it would exceed the amount of all the retail dealers in many entire streets in London.

When we say that there are somewhere about five hundred people who board and lodge on the premises, it will convey some idea of the really surprising commercial character of the house.<sup>55</sup>

Their building extended along the whole block between Grafton Street and University Street, and they added a full-scale furniture department in 1870. In 1873, the trade journal the *House Furnisher* remarked upon this entry of the well-known store-Shoolbred and Co - into the furniture trade. It noted that: 'there is room, ample and to spare, for all fair and honest traders; and although it may be long before the Tottenham Court Road rivals New Bond and Oxford Street, we may hope yet to see the locality redeemed from being a by-word [a word of contempt] among streets.'<sup>56</sup> The success of its businesses was evidence of the street's 'redemption' through its reputation, even if tastemakers despised it.

In the 1880s, the company re-built the whole Shoolbred site as a comprehensive department store. Expansion continued. In 1899, they had 'just completed extensive alterations and additions to their warehousing depositories'.<sup>57</sup> Around the same time, they had built 'spacious factories containing seven floors, each measuring 240ft by 40 ft., for the manufacture of bedding, cabinet furniture and upholstery' in Mitford Place.<sup>58</sup>

Shoolbred's slogan of 'Ready-money no discounts' (1889) was a jibe at the growing tendency to offer customers inducements and credit facilities. Maples, for example had introduced 'hire-purchase' into their store in 1901, and a number of other Tottenham Court Road stores made their names as credit retailers. (See appendix comments) Thirty years later, Shoolbred, in his introduction to Horace

Vachells' book *The Homely Art* wrote that 'every responsible furniture merchant will be grateful to Mr. Vachell for vigorously condemning the tendency to exploit furniture and the love of the home for money-lending purposes'.<sup>59</sup>

It was only in 1913 that the Shoolbred business became a limited company, which was probably too late, as in 1931 its demise occurred.<sup>60</sup> The lack of family interest and their sale of shares, many to Lord Waring of Waring and Gillow stores, combined with their slow response to commercial changes and an unwillingness to give credit, account for this.

### *Heal and Son*

The Heal and Son business was an early occupant of Tottenham Court Road, (first recorded in 1818), that started trading as feather dressers and bedding manufacturers. The emphasis on beds continued, and remained an essential part of the business for many years, although the sale of furniture and accessories began to grow. By 1852, catalogues show a wide and varied range of furniture, as well as beds. Like many other businesses, the mid years of the nineteenth century saw expansion, and Heals soon found that new premises were required. The company recognised the growing importance of retail store architecture. In a review of the new building work in London in 1856, the *Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal* ran a feature on the new frontage of Heal and Sons:

In continuation of that class of buildings in which polychromatic combinations are employed, we may direct attention to another example in Tottenham Court Road, which has recently been built for Messrs. Heal and Son. In this edifice the Italian style is adopted, and a considerable amount of colour introduced in

the pilasters, panels and in the frieze of the main cornice by the instalment of Minton's tiles...'<sup>61</sup>

*The Eclectic Review* of 1865 gives an example of how Heal's interior retail space developed. 'The entire stock is arranged in eight rooms, six galleries each 120 feet long and two large ground floors'. Of considerable interest is the next section that points out that: 'every attention is paid to the manufacture of the cabinetwork, and they have just erected large workshops on the premises for this purpose, that the manufacture may be under their own immediate care.'<sup>62</sup> Heals undertook manufacturing in their Francis Street (now Torrington Place) workshops from 1860.

Heal's business gradually became associated with a particular stylistic ethos that found favour with design reformers [ Arts and Crafts movement] and set it apart from the competition. The well-connected design reformer Charles Eastlake commented:

A well-known firm in Tottenham Court Road has for some years past been selling bedroom wardrobes, toilet-tables, etc., which (I suppose, from their extreme plainness of construction) are called medieval. They are executed in oak and stained deal, and are certainly a great improvement on the old designs in mahogany. But, instead of being cheaper, as would be the case if they were made by the hundred and supplied to "the million", they are actually dearer than their more ornate and pretentious predecessors.<sup>63</sup>

In the early twentieth century, Heals continued to develop this particular approach to retailing which emphasised their apparent design discrimination based initially on Ambrose Heal's involvement with the Arts and Crafts ethos and later with the Design and Industries Association and their promotion of functional modern design.<sup>64</sup> This was not an easy task. Salesmen asked how they were to sell 'prison furniture' and

craftsmen in the workshops were discontented with the new direction. Indeed the success was initially quite limited.

A document of 1919 developed the idea of the store not as a commercial enterprise but as a freely available exhibition space, whereby the inference was that you would not be pestered by salesmen, as might occur in other stores in the street:

If you are already acquainted with Heal's you will know that you are welcome to visit their shop at any time without being expected to buy. If you are not, may we say that it is, in effect, a permanent and constantly changing exhibition of present day furniture and furnishings in which you can rely upon finding fresh objects of interest whenever you like to come.<sup>65</sup>

As with many other businesses, the building erected in 1856 gradually became less suitable for modern retailing. In 1916, they built a new store designed by Heal's cousin, Cecil Brewer. This building, designed in a restrained modern style, employed decorative panels representing the various products that the shop made and sold. A particular feature that was a landmark of the street were the large concave glass shop windows. They did not reflect light so the interiors were very clearly visible from the street.

On the top floor was a novel exhibition space, the Mansard Gallery, a space that again distinguished Heals from other Tottenham Court Road retailers. The interest in art and design meant that the firm developed a 'brand' image and a house style for the company that was ahead of its time. Unlike Shoolbred, Heals weathered the financial depression of the 1930s by developing ranges that were both economical and adventurous, and continued to be a beacon for tasteful contemporary design, being patronised by a range of middle-class tastemakers.<sup>66</sup> A 1959 obituary notice for Sir Ambrose Heal (who joined the firm in 1893) noted that: '[William] Morris and

his followers had indeed lit a candle but its beam as yet shone fitfully if at all in the naughty world of Tottenham Court Road.<sup>67</sup> It was a struggle that Heals took on, which eventually paid off as the company became completely associated with modern and contemporary design.

### **Defamation of Tottenham Court Road**

Despite the success that furniture retailers achieved commercially, and with the exception of Heals, Tottenham Court Road's furniture stores had something of a stigma attached to them, especially by design reformers, who considered the commercial products sold there to be 'cheap and nasty'. In 1864 the architect and designer Charles Eastlake displeased Tottenham Court Road furnishers when he gave a back-handed compliment to them: 'You may buy some [dining chairs] of a really fair design even in Tottenham Court Road, that vanity fair of cheap and flimsy ugliness.'<sup>68</sup> He sustained this attack in his publication *Hints on Household Taste*:

Anyone can get drawing room chairs designed by an architect and executed by private contract for six guineas a chair. What the public want is a shop where such articles are kept in stock and can be purchased for £2 or £3. Curiously enough, in these days of commercial speculation, there is no such establishment. People of ordinary means are compelled either to adopt the cheap vulgarities of Tottenham Court Road or to incur the ruinous expense of having furniture 'made to order'.<sup>69</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century, it was clear that the artistic reformers still despised the commercial furnishers exemplified for them by the businesses in the Tottenham Court Road. For example, in 1897, the author, Mrs Marriot Watson was quoted by *The Artist* magazine, saying: 'Some of the most illustrious writers of today

inhabit homes and houses that decoratively speaking are a slur upon civilisation.’ The magazine continued to explain that the reason for this was ‘in the hire purchase system and in Tottenham Court Road...especially that portion of it which nearly joins hands with the highway to Hampstead.’<sup>70</sup> This was another attack on the retail fraternity of the area, and especially the big stores of Maples, Hewetson’s, and Oetzmann. The only firm in that street with a tolerable reference was Heals. Mrs Watson again: ‘This notorious thoroughfare notwithstanding, we have at last found something which should help to remove the slur upon civilisation. This is a bedroom at Heal and Son, decorated and furnished at moderate cost.’<sup>71</sup>

The denigration continued with remarks by Sir James Yoxall in his work on antique collecting: ‘I need not warn against the black-oak dining-room and hall suites made for Tottenham Court Road smallish shops, in a travesty of Jacobean, about thirty years ago, in such quantities; the merest chip with a knife will reveal the soft white wood underneath the stain’.<sup>72</sup> This reference to the furniture originally sold in the 1870s, seems to perpetuate the myth of the poor quality of the street’s products.

It was not just the home market that was causing concern for critics. This negative reaction was found across the globe, demonstrating the reach of the Tottenham Court Road furniture, through its export trade. In 1869, A.B. Mitford commented upon the furnishing of a Japanese building planned for a formal visit by Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh. The Japanese used Western-styled furniture supplied from Hong Kong, which British commentators thought had ‘a strong flavour of Tottenham Court Road [that] jarred piteously with the imaginative poetry of the Japanese artists’.<sup>73</sup> Another example of this critical condemnation came from Lord Curzon in a speech at the Indian Art Exhibition of 1902. Here he said of the Indian aristocracy that ‘so long as they prefer to fill their palaces with flaming Brussels

carpets, with Tottenham Court Road furniture...’, rather than local products, Indian art will continue to decline.<sup>74</sup> The irony was that the Viceroy furnished his palace with goods from Maples of Tottenham Court Road! Nearly twenty years later the Labour politician Ramsey MacDonald commented on the ‘Beautiful Mogul palaces furnished with cracked furniture from Tottenham Court Road. That is what we have done to the Indian mind.’<sup>75</sup> This condemnation even found its way into novels: E.M. Forster’s *Room with a View* has a passage, which ‘turns its nose up’ at the products of the street: ‘With that outlook it should have been a successful room, but the trail of Tottenham Court Road was upon it; he could almost visualize the motor-vans of Messrs. Shoobred and Messrs. Maple arriving at the door and depositing this chair, those varnished book-cases, that writing-table’.<sup>76</sup>

### **Acclaim**

Despite this unsavoury publicity, Tottenham Court Road remained a draw for customers who were intent on fashionable house furnishing. There is no doubt that the area produced much high-quality furniture.<sup>77</sup> Some customers were even happy to put their experiences to paper. In 1867 Lady Georgina Peel records how her husband’s aunt, Lady Anne Baird helped her in furnishing: ‘When buying furniture for “The Gerwyn” she helped me in every way she could, her house in Eaton Square was always open to us, and she ordered the carriage every morning, driving me to Maple’s, or any out of the way place of which I might have heard as having nice things’.<sup>78</sup>

Another example is that of Mrs Mackinnon and her daughter Ella who visited London in 1886 to select furnishings for their Australian home. Ella’s diary entries reveal much about the day-to-day sequence of shopping events. On the 22nd June, the

diary recorded: 'Hunting at different furniture places...for dining chairs.' Six days later, they spent 'most of the day at Maples.' On the 1<sup>st</sup> July, they were 'furniture purchasing for both dining and drawing room' and on the 31<sup>st</sup> July, they 'returned to Maples to finish up.'<sup>79</sup> This recognition by customers encouraged the *Cabinet Maker*, a trade journal, to comment in 1890 that 'the stigma which used to attach to "Tottenham Court Rd. stuff" must now be removed as regards the leading houses'.<sup>80</sup>

Indeed, the periodical press, through writers such as Mrs Talbot Coke and her advice columns, recommended Tottenham Court Road stores. For example, in her *Hearth and Home* column of the 24<sup>th</sup> May 1900 she specifically advised her readers to go to particular stores to purchase recommended items to solve their furnishing problems. These stores included Maple's, Bartholomew and Fletcher, Hewetson's, Heal's, and Spriggs.<sup>81</sup> An editorial in *The Times* of May 1914 commented that 'we have, in the windows of London's furniture shops, an epitome of contemporary taste in decoration'. They continued:

Those who from curiosity or for business are accustomed to walk the varied length of the Tottenham Court Road, know well and envy the spots where, at intervals, the towering plate glass discloses, as it were, to a prying public, the comfortable hearth of a nameless home. Outside, an overcoat may be little enough protection under the chilly skies. But within a real fire gleams in the grate, chairs and tables are socially grouped, decanter and glasses are set out and only the dessert piled on the oaken sideboard, repels by its too permanent and indigestible appearance.<sup>82</sup>

Wax fruit desserts apart, the display seems to represent an ideal of an English interior



In 1921, *The Times* newspaper published an item entitled the *Street of Busy Shops* unconsciously pointing to an example of retail location theory. The article began thus:

Trade is a strange thing. Historians and economists say trade follows the flag, but the shopping woman knows that it follows the omnibus. One of the busiest streams of traffic in London is that which, fed from many centres, rushes with ceaseless clatter down Tottenham Court Road. It is a shopping centre with a strangely marked personality, and one can almost see it grow as its businesses one after the other rebuild or expand. Furniture is the first idea that the name of Tottenham Court Road evokes'.<sup>83</sup>

The article mentions the premises and displays of Maple's, Shoobred and Heal's, and then dwells on the firm of Catesby and their mascot, a wooden tobacconist's figure of a kilted Jacobite Highlander called Phineas Maclino.<sup>84</sup> This reference to popular culture indicates the familiarity that the readers of the newspaper may have had with the store and its reputation for linoleum. What is clear is that this period was the 'peak entry' in Swann's terms

### **Decline and Revival**

As has been shown, there were particular factors that worked to encourage the early development of Tottenham Court Road area as a furniture hub. When these factors began to change they gradually reversed the fortunes of the area. Swans 'peak entry' point where the costs of clustering start to outweigh benefits, where the rate of growth falls, where external competition consolidates and develops are illustrated by the rising rents, the increased costs and shortages of skilled labour, and the loss of competitive advantage due to developments elsewhere in the trade (especially in new

technologies, industrial re-organisation and large scale factories established outside London ) that all meant that Tottenham Court Road gradually became a just a selling area.<sup>85</sup> The fact that by 1951 the number of those employed in the furniture making industry in the area had dropped to 3066 therefore only accounting for 4.9% of the Greater London total indicated the changes.<sup>86</sup> As these were mainly related to the exclusive up-market bespoke trades, the saturation or exhaustion point was close.

During the Second World War, the street suffered extensive bomb damage, which eventually led to larger scale re-developments during the 1950s and 1960s and changed the nature of the retail aspects of the street. Rebuilding was not fully complete until the late 1950s by which time the furnishing market had already seen change. New suburban and regional shopping areas encouraged multiple retail furnishers so there was less incentive for customers to visit the metropolis for furniture. Indeed, during the late 1940s and 1950s Maples began a programme of expansion in provincial town centres.<sup>87</sup>

In the post-war period, Tottenham Court Road became better known for consumer electronics, as furnishings began to take a secondary place. In 1972, the premises of Maples were demolished and they moved out of Tottenham Court Road. Catesby's shut; Wolfe and Hollander closed down; and Heals went through some dramatic restructuring. This looked like the beginning of the end. However, more recently, individual stores and multiple furnishing groups such as Cargo, Habitat, The Pier and Lombok have opened branches, (14 home furnishing stores recorded in 2009) and the process of adjustment continued. Nevertheless, the street is now as famous for electronic goods as it is for furnishings. The changes in demand, materials and technologies, as well as purchasing patterns, reflect a progressive revision of the

cluster. These cyclical developments will no doubt continue to change the face of the  
Tottenham Court Road.

---

**Fig 3. Details of furnishing businesses and associated trades**

**(Source: London Post Office Directories)**

TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD 1839/41 West Side			
Street Number	Business Name	Business	Comment
9	Jeremy Danks	Floorcloth and Carpet Warehouse	
25	Moore and Co.	Dealers in Foreign China, Ancient Furniture And Curiosities	
30	Frederick Bohn	Silk Dyer	
36	Thomas Prall	Linen Draper and Silk Mercer	
38	Jackson Giblett	Silk Mercer and Warehouseman	
41	Charles Mills	Timber Merchant	
80	George Gardiner	Upholsterer	
81	Camp and Gover	Turners	
83	Daniel Shatford	Cabinetmaker	
84	Thomas Eve	Turner Carver and Cabinetmaker	Previously of No.36 in 1835
87	William Southey	Japanner and Bedstead Maker	
95-6	Dry and Everett	Cabinet and Carpet Warehouse	
97-8	Dry and Everett	Draper and Mercer	
103-4	Benjamin Coote	Upholsterer and Furniture Dealer	
TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD 1839/41 East Side			
Street Number	Business Name	Business	Comment
137	Davis	New and Second-hand Furniture Warehouse	
139	George Baker	Ironmonger	
142	Edward Grant	Wholesale Leather Warehouse	
147	Francis Godbold	Upholstery and Furniture	Also at 38 Grafton Square
154/5/6	James Shoolbred	Drapers	
167	Joseph Sainsbury	Upholstery and Furniture	
169	John Russell	Glass and Lustre Manufacturer	
170	John Rawlings	Cabinetmaker	
177	Richard Lacey	Fringe Manufacturer	
178	Thomas Gooding	Whitewood Manufacturer	
185	F. Harrison	Furnishing Ironmonger	
193	William Reid	Furnishing Undertaker	
195/6	Collard and Collard	Piano Mftrs.	

196	Fanny Heal and Son	French Bed Maker	Previously at 33 Rathbone Place
204	Thomas William and John Hewetson	Upholstery Warehouse	
211	F. Harrison	Furnishing Ironmonger	
219	Charles Chinnock	Cabinetmaker and Upholsterer	
231	John Harris	Upholsterer	
240	John Sherrad	Trimming Warehouse	
246	Benjamin Le Cand	Plate Glass Supplier, Carver and Gilder	1809-25 at 38 Gt. Prescott St., Aldgate
247	Wood and Barrett	Furnishing Ironmongers	
258	James Purver	Upholsterer and Cabinetmaker	

TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD 1852 East and West			
Street Number	Business Name	Business	Comment
WEST SIDE			
22	Charles Adams	Upholsterer	
50	George Swan Cowtan and Cale William Crage	Carver Wood Turners Cabinet Maker	
80	George Gardner	Upholsterer	
EAST SIDE			
137/8	John Davis	Upholsterer	
139	George Baker	Ironmonger	
145/7	John Maple	Furniture and Carpet Warehouse	
152/6	Shoolbred	Draper and Furnisher	
159	Edwards Gardner	Upholsterer	
190	Frederick Best	Furniture Dealer	
196	Heal and Son	Bedding Mftrs	
204,11,12	Hewetson W, J and T	House Furnishers	
215	Gabriel Cook	Looking Glass Mftr and Furniture Warehouse	
227	Thomas Hird	Furniture Warehouse	
231		Upholsterer	

TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD 1882 West Side			
Street Number	Business Name	Business	Comment
22	Tottenham Court Road Furnishing Co.	House Furnishers	
41	John Knight Frederick Cole Florance McCarthy	Veneer Moulding Maker French Polisher Cabinetmaker	
50	Tom Halse Jun. James Dodimead Henry Minchin Robert Marmoy	Wood Carver Steam Fret Cutter Cabinetmaker Blacksmith	
65-5	Waugh and Sons	Carpet Manufacturers	
80	Samuel Smith	Furniture Dealer	

TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD 1882 East Side

Street Number	Business Name	Business	Comment
140	Charles Barker	Cabinetmaker	
145-149	Maple and Co.	Complete House Furnishers	
151-58	Shoolbred And Co	Department Store	
165-6	Thompson and Co	Drapers	
171-2	Henry Longman	Cabinetmaker	
176	Samuel LeCand	Carver and Gilder	
185	Richard Carter and Son	Cabinetmaker	Antique Dealer
187a	Frederick Coote	Deal Furniture Maker	
189-90	Richard Hunter	Upholsterer	
193	Glazier and Sons	Furnishers and Undertakers	
194a	Herbert and Co.	Upholsterer	Also at 202
195-8	Heal and Sons	House Furnishers	
200, 203-4	Hewetson Thexton and Peart	Cabinetmaker and House Furnishers	Also 1-15 Alfred Mews
202	Herbert and Co.	Upholsterer	
207-8	Bruce Smith and Co.	Upholsterer	
211-12,13	Hewetson and Milner	Cabinetmaker and House Furnishers	
217-9	Bartholomew and Fletcher	Upholsterer	
224	Hire System Furniture Co.	House Furnishers	Hire purchase specialists
227	Lewin Crawcour	Cabinetmaker	
230-32	Coates and Co.	Complete House Furnishers	
241	William Spriggs	Carver and Gilder	
246-7	John Ward & Co.	Invalid Chair Maker	

248-9-50	Frank Moeder	Cabinetmaker	Moeder's Hire System advertised in <i>Notes and Queries</i> , 1879
255-8	Davis and Co.	Complete House Furnishers	
259	Lewis Isaacs	Furniture Warehouse	

TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD 1895 West Side
-------------------------------------

Street Number	Business Name	Business	Comment
16A	William Orpin	Cabinetmaker	
41	Frederick Cole	French Polisher	
50	James Dodimead	Steam Fret Cutter	
64-67	Catesby and Co.	Complete House Furnishers	
78-78A	Palmer & Co.	Complete House Furnishers	
78B-9	Arthur Barr	Furniture Dealer	
79	Antony Clarkson	House Furnisher	

TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD 1895 East Side
-------------------------------------

Street Number	Business Name	Business	Comment
141-149	Maple and Co.	Complete House Furnishers	
150-62	Shoolbred	Department Store	
164-6	Thomas Thompson	Drapers	
171-3	Longman and Co.	Cabinetmaker	
176	Frederick Palmer	House Furnisher	
187a	Frederick Coote	Deal Furniture Maker	
189-90	Universal Furnishing Co	House Furnisher	
193	Glazier and Sons	Furnishers and Undertakers	
195-8	Heal and Sons	House Furnisher	
200, 203-4	Hewestson Thexton and Peart	House Furnisher	
202	Richard Hunter & Co.	Upholsterer	
207-8	Thomas Enoch	Complete House Furnisher	
211-12,13,15	Hewestson and Milner	House Furnisher	
217-9	Bartholomew and Fletcher	Upholsterer	
227-8	Crawcross Lewin & Co.	Cabinetmaker	
230	Edwards & Co.	Upholsterer	
232	Frederick Avant	Complete House Furnisher	

239	J. Goldstein	Complete House Furnisher	
240-41	Spriggs	Carver and Gilder	
244	Moeder & Co.	Cabinetmaker	
246-7	John Ward and Co	Invalid Chair Manufacturers	
251	J. Bernstein	Upholsterer	
255-6	Davis and Co.	Complete House Furnishers	
259-60	William Spriggs	Cabinetmaker	
261	Albert Toghill	Billiard Table Manufacturer	

TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD 1915 West Side

Street Number	Business Name	Business	Comment
41	Albert Upperton	Upholsterer	
50	George Amery Anthony Lye	Carver Cabinetmaker	
64-7	Catesby and Co	House Furnishers	
78-78a	Palmer & Co	House Furnishers	
79	Anthony Clarkson	House Furnishers	
107-8	Antill & Co.	House Furnishers	

TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD 1915 East Side

Street Number	Business Name	Business	Comment
141-50	Maple and Co	Complete House Furnishers	
151-58	Jas Shoolbred	Department Store	
163-70	Thompson and Co.	Drapers	
171-3	Avant and Co.	House Furnishers	
175-6	Henry Porter	House Furnishers	
179	Edwards and Co.	House Furnishers	Also at 213,229,261
180	Thomas and Sons	House Furnishers	Hire purchase specialists
187A	William Page	Cabinetmaker	
189-90	Randall and Co	House Furnishers	
196-8	Heal and Sons	Complete House Furnishers	
209	Davis and Sons	House Furnishers	
213-5	John Line and Sons	Wallpaper And Plaster Mftrs	
217-8	Bartholemew and Fletcher	House Furnishers	
220 + 252-6	Wolfe and Hollander	House Furnishers	Hire purchase specialists
222, +227-8	West Central Furnishing Co.	House Furnishers	Hire purchase specialists
229,229A +261	Edwards and Co.	House Furnishers	
238-41	William Spriggs and Co.	Cabinet Makers	



246-7	John Ward	Invalid Chair Mftrs	
248-50	London and Provincial Furnishing Co.	House Furnishers	Hire purchase specialists

I am very grateful to the anonymous reviewers whose incisive comments have been very helpful in the final shaping of this paper.

<sup>1</sup> B. Chancellor, *London's Old Latin Quarter* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1930), 11.

<sup>2</sup> Other streets in London were associated with particular furniture businesses, e.g. Wardour Street for antiques and curios and Catherine Street for patent and adjustable furniture.

<sup>3</sup> S. Brown, "Retail Location Theory: Evolution and Evaluation." *International Journal of Retail Distribution and Consumer Research* 3, No.2 (1993), 185-229.

<sup>4</sup> A. Marshall, *Principles of Economics* (London: Macmillan. 1920), 126.

<sup>5</sup> M. Fujita and J-F Thisse, *Economics of agglomeration* 8th ed: *cities, industrial location, and regional growth* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2002)

<sup>6</sup> E.M. Hoover and F. Giarratani. *An Introduction to Regional Economics*, in The Web Book of Regional Science ([www.rri.wvu.edu/regscweb.html](http://www.rri.wvu.edu/regscweb.html)), ed., S. Loveridge. Morgantown, WV: Regional Research Institute, West Virginia University 1999, "In some instances, each unit finds advantage in locating near others of the same kind primarily because the units are not exactly identical. This generally happens when the output is varied and changing somewhat unpredictably, so that buyers need to "shop"—that is, to compare various sellers' offerings. Selling locations attract buyers according to how wide a choice they can offer; therefore, sellers gain by being part of a large cluster."

<sup>7</sup> See further J. Wilson and A. Popp, *Industrial Clusters and Regional business networks in England 1750-1970*, (Ashgate, 2003) and I. Gordon and P. McCann, 'Industrial Clusters: Complexes, Agglomeration and/or Social Networks,' *Urban History*, 37 no.3 (2000) 513-532.

<sup>8</sup> See for examples P. Maskell and L. Kebir What Qualifies as a Cluster Theory?

DRUID Working Paper No. 05-09 [http://www.versailles-grignon.inra.fr/sadap/layout/set/print/content/download/3184/31230/version/1/file/kebir\\_2005\\_1.pdf](http://www.versailles-grignon.inra.fr/sadap/layout/set/print/content/download/3184/31230/version/1/file/kebir_2005_1.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> P. Swann, M. Prevezer, and D. Stout, *The Dynamics of Industrial Clustering: International Comparisons in Computing and Biotechnology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 6-7.

<sup>10</sup> P. Johnson, 'Economic development and industrial dynamism in Victorian England', *London Journal* 21, no.1, (1996) 27-37.

<sup>11</sup> M. Ball & D. Sunderland, *An Economic History of London 1800-1914* (London: Routledge, 2001), 294.

<sup>12</sup> L. J. Daunton, 'Industry in London: Revisions and Reflections', *London Journal*, 21, no.1, 1996, 1-2.

<sup>13</sup> These divisions included cabinetmakers, fancy cabinetmakers, frame makers, chair makers and upholsterers.

<sup>14</sup> G. Dodd, *Days at the Factories or the Manufacturing Industries of Great Britain described* (London: Chas Knight, 1843).

<sup>15</sup> These terms refer to Henry Mayhew's classification of trades in his letters for the *Morning Chronicle*, 1849-50. They refer to employers who pay wages more or less than those, of the trade society rates. See examples in *The Unknown Mayhew, Selections from the "Morning Chronicle" 1849-50*, E. P. Thompson, Eileen Yeo (editors) (Pontypool: The Merlin Press, 1971).

<sup>16</sup> P. Hall, *Industries of London since 1861* (London: Routledge, 1962) 83. Hall also identified the factory system but that developed post-1920 in the main.

<sup>17</sup> P. Kirkham, 'The London Furniture Trade 1700-1870' *Furniture History*, 24, 1988, 57-71.

<sup>18</sup> H. Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor* (London: Griffin Bohn & Co. 1861) Volume 3. 222. An interesting and later aside is the Upholsterers' Club established at 117 Gower Street as a recreational facility for craftsmen. Recorded in *The Stage Year Book* (London: Carson and Comerford, 1908), 79.

<sup>19</sup> Mayhew defined Garret-masters, as 'those who make up goods for the trade on the smallest amount of capital, and generally on speculation'.

- 
- <sup>20</sup> Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, volume 2 (London: Griffin, Bohn, and Company 1861) 16.
- <sup>21</sup> For further detail on location for West and East Ends see J. Oliver, *Development of the Furniture Industry*, (Pergamon 1966)
- <sup>22</sup> C. Lee, *British Regional Employment Statistics, 1841-1971* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).
- <sup>23</sup> C. Booth, *Life and Labour of the People of London*, Second Series: Industry, (1902-4), 182. The piecemasters' shops refer to the sub-contracting process used in this type of furniture making.
- <sup>24</sup> Extracted from J. L. Oliver, *Development of the Furniture Industry* (Pergamon: Oxford, 1966), 35.
- <sup>25</sup> *Dictionary of English Furniture Makers 1660-1840*, (Furniture History Society: London), 551-2.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* 526-7.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* 423-4. the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Devonshire were amongst Hervé's clients.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* 324.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* 83. His business later relocated to Air St. Piccadilly.
- <sup>30</sup> B. Chancellor's book *London's Old Latin quarter* (1930) stresses this artistic connection. The 1914 London street directory also gives a flavour. The listing of cabinetmakers near Tottenham Court Road included Ambroino Filipo and Sons, Barone, Adolphe Beauvais, Bendi Calisto, Bevilacqua and Collo, and Achille Balestri.
- <sup>31</sup> W.J and T. Hewetson were trading at 185 Oxford Street and 204 Tottenham Court Road in 1839 and 1852. The later partnerships of Hewetson and Milner and Hewetson, Thexton and Peart Ltd, appear in the directories from 1882.
- <sup>32</sup> Oetzmann established in 1848 had premises in Hampstead Road, just beyond the end of Tottenham Court Road.
- <sup>33</sup> The canal linked the Grand Junction Canal from the Midlands through north London to the Thames at Limehouse. It was fully completed by 1820. R. Porter, *London: A Social History* (Harvard, 1998), 218.
- <sup>34</sup> J. Tallis, (1839), *London Street Views*, (London Topographical Society, 1969).
- <sup>35</sup> P. G. Hall, *The Industries of London since 1861* (London: Hutchinson), 81.
- <sup>36</sup> See further M. Fujita and J-F Thisse, *Economics of agglomeration: cities, industrial location, and regional growth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- <sup>37</sup> J.L. Oliver, *The Development and Structure of the Furniture Industry*, 64. It is important to note however, that there were furniture related businesses in these street from early in the nineteenth century See *Dictionary of English Furniture Makers 1660-1840*.
- <sup>38</sup> The important business of James Shoolbred established in 1820 grew to become one of the more important department furnishing stores.
- <sup>39</sup> *House Furnisher*, 10<sup>th</sup> June 1873.
- <sup>40</sup> Catesby's established at 64-7 Tottenham Court Road in 1910. They became specialists in linoleum and survived until the 1960s.
- <sup>41</sup> Wolfe and Hollander established at 220 Tottenham Court Road in 1903. They ceased business in the 1980s.
- <sup>42</sup> By 1881, Maple and Co. had factories in Beaumont Place, Nr. Tottenham Court Road; Midford Place, off 113 Tottenham Court Road; 14 Frederick Street, off Hampstead Road; and 15-23 Southampton Court, off Southampton Row.
- <sup>43</sup> Obituary of Sir John Maple, *The Times*, 25<sup>th</sup> November 1903.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* 37-8.
- <sup>45</sup> P. Russell, *Leaves from a Journalist's Notebook* (London: Gordon and Gotch, 1876), 57.
- <sup>46</sup> "The influence of Commerce", *Illustrated London News*, June 17<sup>th</sup> 1893.
- <sup>47</sup> Select Committee on the Sweating System, PP 1888. xx. p.586.
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>49</sup> Maples employed 1295 men and boys, 391 women and girls, 365 sales and clerical staff, making a total of 2051. The stock of timber in their Islington yard on 12th May 1888 was as follows: 4,476 hardwood logs, 3,507 planks, 132,553 deals, 37,076 ready cut pieces. These details were given in evidence to the above
- <sup>50</sup> Select Committee op. cit 630.
- <sup>51</sup> S. De Falbe, *James Shoolbred and Co.* (MA Thesis, Royal College of Art, 1985).
- <sup>52</sup> *The British Metropolis* (Hall Virtue and Co. London, 1851), p. 228
- <sup>53</sup> G. F. Pardon, *The Popular Guide to London* (London: Routledge, 1862), 101.
- <sup>54</sup> W. M. Thackeray, *The Adventures of Philip on his way through the world* (London: Smith Elder 1862), 231.

- <sup>55</sup> J. Burn, *Commercial Enterprise and Social Progress* (London: Piper Stephenson and Spence, 1858), 55
- <sup>56</sup> *House Furnisher*, 10<sup>th</sup> June 1873.
- <sup>57</sup> *Cabinet Maker*, April 1899, p. 276.
- <sup>58</sup> Shoolbred catalogue, 1889.
- <sup>59</sup> H. Vachell, *The Homely Art* Foreword (London: Shoolbred and Co. 1928)
- <sup>60</sup> See *Cabinet Maker*, 7<sup>th</sup> March 1931, 555. See also Sophie De Falbe, *James Shoolbred & Co., Department Store*, 148-56. Also see 'Shoolbred's Premises' *The Times*, April 15<sup>th</sup> 1932, 11.
- <sup>61</sup> *Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal*, 19, (1856), 185.
- <sup>62</sup> *The Eclectic Review*, 8, 121, (1865).
- <sup>63</sup> C. Eastlake, *Hints on Household Furniture* (London: Longmans Green, 1869), 162.
- <sup>64</sup> Heal was a founder member of the Design and Industries Association (DIA). The Association attempted to adapt the Arts and Crafts Movement's ideals to twentieth century needs in combination with industrial methods.
- <sup>65</sup> Cited in T. Potts, 'Creating Modern Tendencies: the symbolic economics of furnishing' in D. Bell and J. Hollows, (eds.) *Historicizing Lifestyles* (Ashgate 2006), 163.
- <sup>66</sup> See Heal's Archive at Archive of Art and Design (Victoria and Albert Museum) See also *Heals 200 years of Design and Inspiration, 1810-2010*, (Heal & Son Ltd, 2009). S. Goodden, *At the sign of the four Poster: A history of Heals* (London: Heals 1984)
- <sup>67</sup> *The Times*, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 1959, 15.
- <sup>68</sup> C. L. Eastlake, 'The Fashion of Furniture', *Cornhill Magazine*, July, 1864.
- <sup>69</sup> C. L. Eastlake, *Hints on Household Taste* 62-3.
- <sup>70</sup> Cited in Adburgham, A., 'Give the customers what they want', *Architectural Review*, May, 1977, 295.
- <sup>71</sup> Adburgham, op. cit.
- <sup>72</sup> Sir J. Yoxall, *More about Collecting* (London: S. Paul and Co., 1913), 73.
- <sup>73</sup> C. Blacker, H. Cortazzi and B-A. Shillony, *Collected Writings of Modern Western Scholars on Japan Volumes 1-3* (Routledge, 2000), 103.
- <sup>74</sup> Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelites and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, (London: Macmillan, 1905) Vol 2, 478. Also see *New York Times* 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1903.
- <sup>75</sup> J. Ramsey Macdonald, *The Government of India* (London: Swarthmore Press, 1920), 171-2.
- <sup>76</sup> E.M. Forster, *A Room with a View*, 1908, Chapter 8
- <sup>77</sup> See for examples Christies and Sotheby's past auction sale catalogues.
- <sup>78</sup> E. Peel, (ed.), *Recollections of Lady Georgina Peel*, 1920, 224, cited in Girling-Budd, 'Holland and Sons of London and Gillows of London and Lancaster: a comparison of two nineteenth-century furnishing firms', MA Dissertation, RCA, 1998, p. 88.
- <sup>79</sup> T. Lane, and J. Searle, *Australians at home* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1990), 31-2.
- <sup>80</sup> *Cabinet Maker*, 1st January 1890.
- <sup>81</sup> Mrs. Talbot Coke 'Home Advice', *Hearth & Home: An Illustrated Weekly Journal for Gentlewomen* (London, England), Thursday, May 24, 1900, Issue 471, 154.
- <sup>82</sup> 'Tottenham Court Road', *The Times*, 15 May, 1914, 9.
- <sup>83</sup> *The Times* April 02, 1921. 50.
- <sup>84</sup> Phineas MacLino refers to the specialism of Catesby's in supplying linoleum and cork flooring. The mascot was well known for its part in University College 'rags' in the 1920 and 30s.
- <sup>85</sup> J. Oliver gives the following figures demonstrating the decline in cabinet-making establishments in the W.1. London postal area: 1911=152; 1939 =57, 1958 =15. Oliver records similar declines for chair making and upholstery. See *Development of the Furniture Industry*, 1966, 83. Although a number of manufacturers established trade showrooms in the area to display their wares.
- <sup>86</sup> P.G. Hall, *Industries of London*, Table 9.
- <sup>87</sup> By 1959, the Maples organisation included branches in Birmingham, Bournemouth, Brighton, Leeds, Bristol and Leicester, Buenos Aires and Paris as well as subsidiary companies trading under other names in Ipswich, Nottingham, Exeter, Liverpool and Newcastle. There were also five factories: two in Cheltenham and three in London. Wolfe and Hollander also set up a branch network, and Heals later opened a branch in Guildford.