

Tables Folding



Luke Hughes

Furniture in Architecture

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Robust, beautifully engineered brass metalwork, modelled on shotgun tolerances

Introduction

One major theme in the Luke Hughes® approach to 'furniture in architecture' is that the products should enable high quality buildings to be capable of multiple uses, something that largely depends on the adaptability of the furniture.

Over the years, Luke Hughes® has developed ingenious solutions that enable academic buildings to work harder. Dining halls, common rooms, libraries, places of worship, lecture theatres and auditoria, meeting and conference rooms – all the significant public spaces that proclaim the values of a school or university – increasingly require tables to fold, chairs to stack and trolleys to make handling and storage efficient.

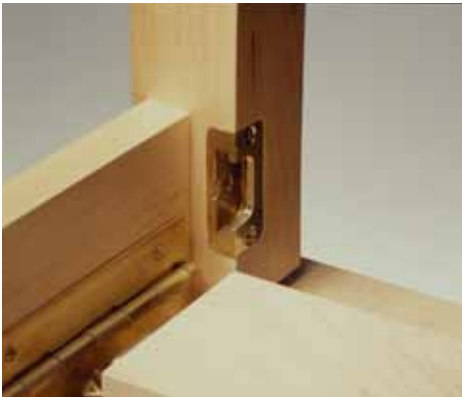
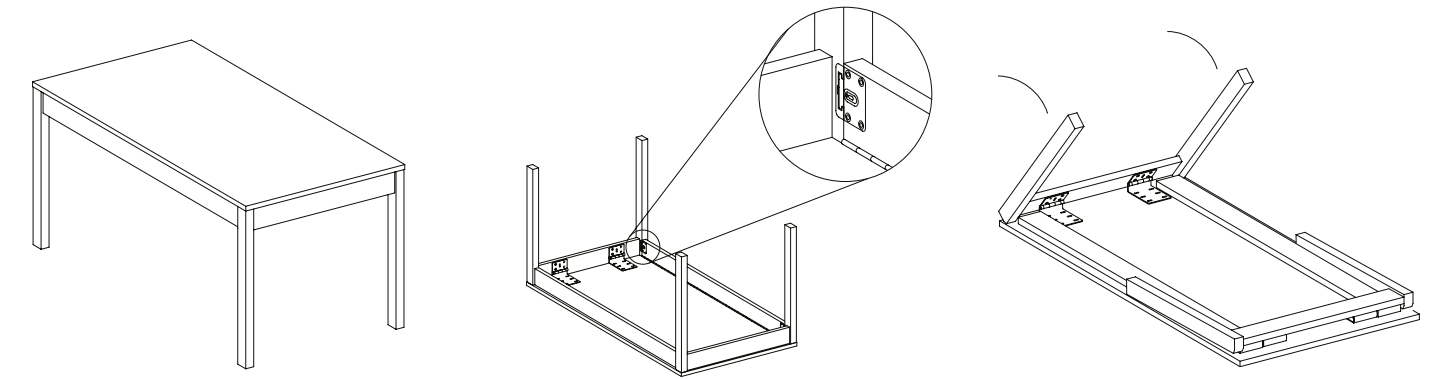
At the heart of these solutions lie patented, mechanical devices that incorporate robust and proven engineering solutions. Many of these techniques have been developed from the gun-making trade and have evolved through years of testing and refinement. They can be adapted for bespoke solutions, but the Trojan, Athena and Minerva ranges are three of the more standard designs.

Above all, the key to efficient furniture handling lies in the quality and ease of use of the storage arrangements. For folding tables, these can be racks in dedicated storage cupboards, racks clad in panelling to match existing joinery or on mobile trolleys.

Over the last 25 years, Trojan, Athena and Minerva table ranges have been installed in nearly three hundred universities, colleges, schools and even Royal Palaces.

The concept

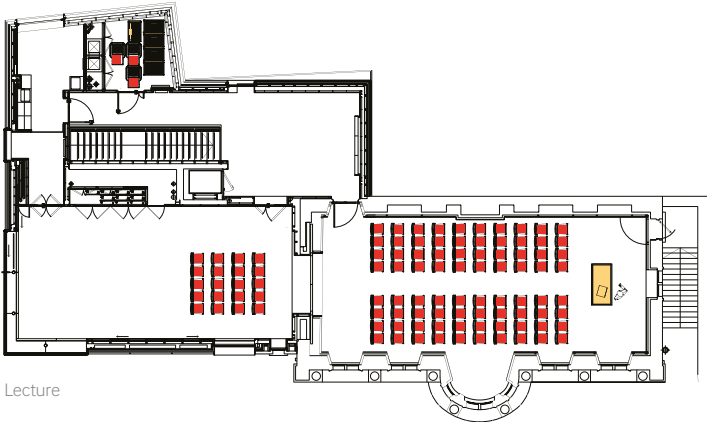
- to enable a table to fold (without looking like a trestle table)
- to enhance both function and appearance of outstanding architectural spaces
- to make a standard production technique applicable to bespoke products
- to enable busy institutions to create flexibility in their interiors
- to help them to generate rental income from their interiors



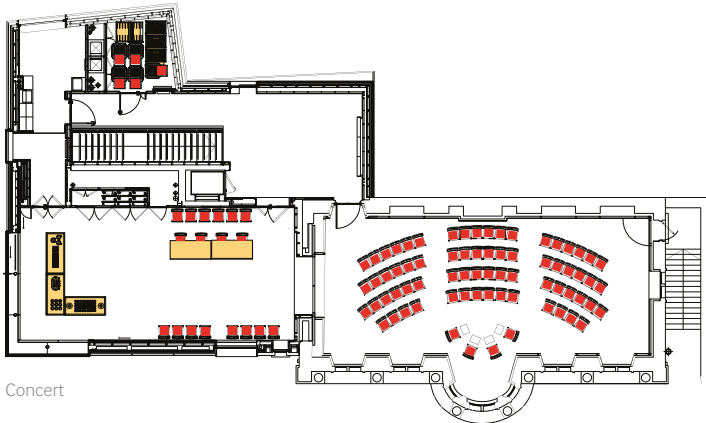
Flexible solutions

Lincoln College, Oxford, recently commissioned an extension to a 19th century building, to enable the college to link the two spaces for lectures, concerts, seminars, meetings, teaching, break-out and dining.

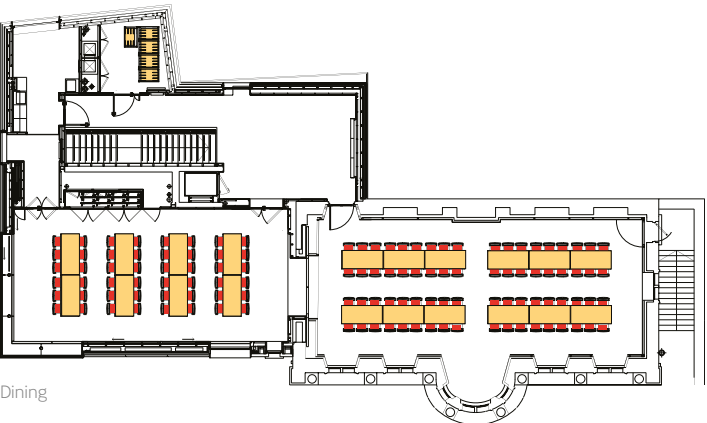
As with all 'flexible solutions' the rationalisation of the storage and handling are key - and there lies much of our expertise.



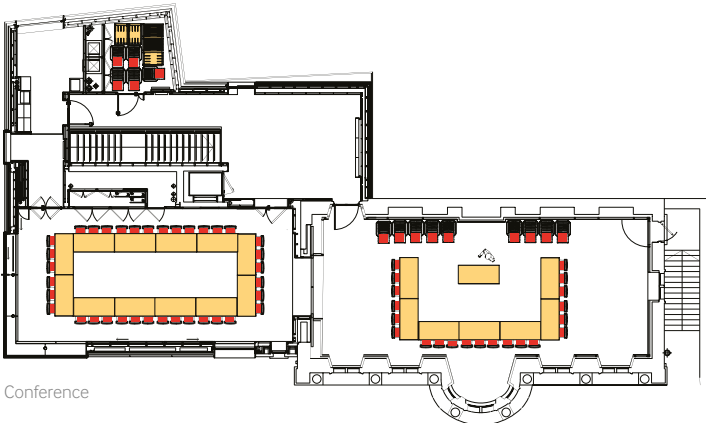
Lecture



Concert



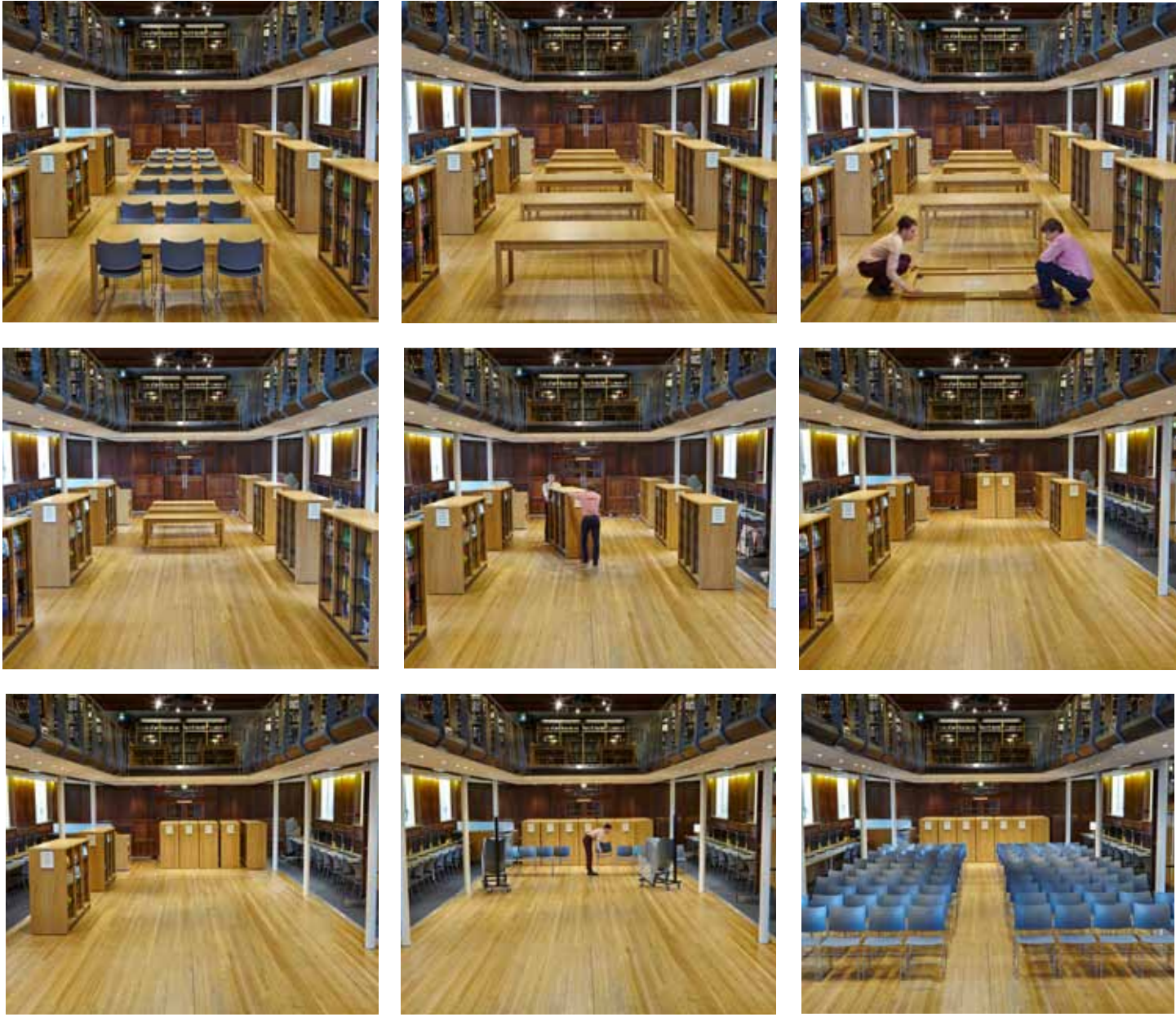
Dining



Conference



Highgate School, London



3 styles

There are three standard design languages to support the fundamental concept - how to enable a timber table to fold, without looking as though it does.



Trojan

The original design – the Trojan – is visually the most robust, with over-sailing tops and a variety of leg profiles, most useful with arm-chairs or where the tops must float over legs.



Athena

The Athena range is the most simple and restrained design of the three. The tables are both visually and physically lighter.



Minerva

The Minerva range is similar to Athena but includes a triple-reed moulding on the legs and a single-reed moulding on the underside of the top, making it more suited for conventional settings.





Trojan

Trojan - the deceptive workhorse - is the original range and consists of both fixed-leg and folding rectangular tables, as well as semi-circular versions. The design is intended for rooms with large-scale architectural interiors and incorporates an over-sailing top (useful with arm-chairs or where the top must float over legs) and robust leg sections which can be shaped to a variety of profiles.

The more usual choices of timber are oak, walnut or cherry, although the tables can be made in a variety of timbers (see p28).

All the rectangular tables illustrated here can be folded and placed in nearby storage racks or trolleys, with the semi-circular ends used as console tables.





Wolfson College, Cambridge

The Senior Common Room at Wolfson uses the Trojan table range for faculty meetings, conferences and occasionally for formal dinners. When the tables are folded away, the room can become a more relaxed, drawing-room setting (incorporating matching low tables) and the table storage unit is then used for laying out newspapers and refreshments.



The dining hall at Newnham College has, for the last twenty-five years, used 40 solid oak tables from the Trojan range. The architectural style of the building, designed by Basil Champneys in 1876, reflects the ideals of the Arts and Crafts Movement, which particularly valued the connection between furniture and architecture.

The tables can be used for casual and formal dining, but also rearranged for plays, concerts, lectures, buffets and receptions. The hall is particularly popular for wedding receptions during college vacations.

“You will be pleased to know that the Newnham furniture is standing up superbly to the rigours of college life and, 25 years on, still look like new. It is a great testament of the skills and workmanship of your team”

Dame Patricia Hodgson
Principal, Newnham College, Cambridge.



Newnham College, Cambridge



Trojan (with solid quarter-cut oak tops) Newnham College, Cambridge





Athena

The most simple and restrained design of the three ranges and, like Trojan, available as both fixed-leg and folding rectangular tables, as well as semi-circular versions. The distinguishing features of the range are the solid timber base structure, un-moulded contemporary edge profile, the configuration of the lipping and veneer details and the dimensions of the leg section.

The tables are both visually and physically lighter (than Trojan) with the legs set immediately under the outside edges of the tables, to align with the solid timber lippings of the tops.

Modesty panels can also be incorporated on a front table, for instance in a lecture format.





Athena tables allow this multi-purpose room at St. Catharine's College to be used for faculty meetings, teaching seminars, conferences, lectures or for buffet receptions. The tables fold away into an adjoining storage unit (see p30).



Ramsden Room, St Catharine's College, Cambridge





Minerva

The Minerva range is similar to Athena but features a triple-reed moulding to the legs and a single quirk detail to the underside of the tops, making the range suitable for more traditional settings.

As with Trojan and Athena versions, the standard designs include veneered tops with solid-timber lippings (although tops in solid timber, laminates, or desk-top linoleum are also available as specials). The more usual choices of timber are oak, walnut or cherry, although the tables can be made in a variety of timbers.





For their Senior Common Room, St. Catharine's use a mix of fixed-leg and folding Minerva tables, specially stained to precisely match the 17th century panelling. A table-storage unit was made with a panelled front, to imitate the ancient wood-work details, and is also used as a console table for refreshments.



Senior Common Room, St Catharine's College, Cambridge

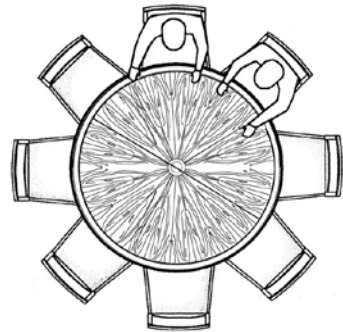
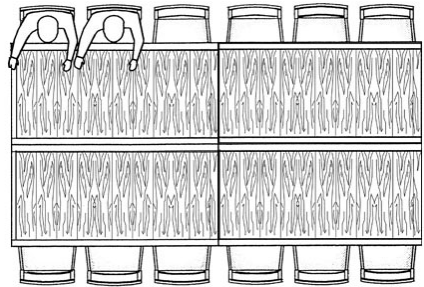
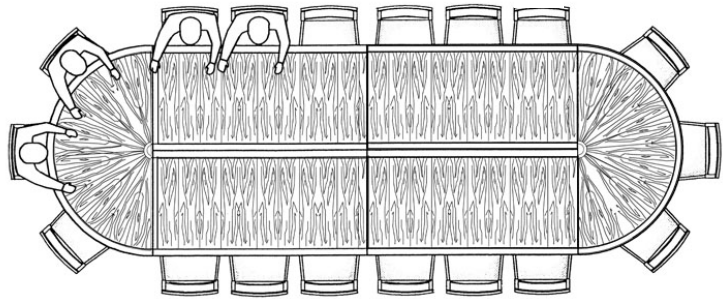


Specials

Although the tables in the ranges are most readily available as standard products, experience shows that specials are frequently requested - and these can certainly be accommodated. All the tables are made to order, either as fixed-leg, folding-leg or a combination of both.

Here are a small selection of projects which have incorporated other timbers, edge profiles, contrasting veneers, laminates, and leg details. The permutations are endless and depend on one concept - that tables which fold need not look as though they do. All this depends on the precision of the hinges, locking mechanism and engineering.

Please contact the design studio to explore other options.



Veneers and surface options

Veneered tops with solid lippings are provided as standard, using 18mm (3/4") particle board with 45mm (1 3/4") edge. The standard veneer pattern for square and rectangular tables is slip-matched, crown-cut across the width; for semi-circular tables, radial or quartered. Other patterns (and even inlays) can be considered as specials.



Storage options - cupboards

Storage racks to store folding tables can be custom-made to fit the space available (see p15). Alternatively, table storage cupboards, to store tables in the room where they are used, can be made to match the tables (or any surrounding woodwork) in style, timber or colour.



Storage options - trolleys

Trolleys to store and transport tables are specifically designed and made to suit the number and size of the tables, taking into account on-site dimensions (in particular those of elevators and door frames).





History and Philosophy

Luke Hughes was educated at Cambridge University before setting up a small craft workshop in the back-yard of a house in Bloomsbury in 1978, then moving to Covent Garden in 1981. The business was incorporated in 1986, at that time producing design work and prototypes for Liberty & Co., Heals and John Lewis Partnership.

Hughes's design philosophy is heavily influenced by the principles of the Arts and Crafts Movement, not least about the nature of craftsmanship. Another central principle is that, in any quality building, the connection between architecture and furniture should be seamless: most buildings cannot function without furniture, yet inappropriate pieces grossly undermine great architecture.

Since 1990, he has focused on design for public spaces, particularly in the corporate, leisure, institutional and ecclesiastical sectors – principally for buildings with significant architectural interiors.



Client comments

“When I saw the new chairs in the library, I had the curious sense that they had always been there, so right do they look. As to the craftsmanship, it is superb . . .”

Bursar, Keble College, Oxford



“We all think the room looks absolutely spectacular. Your furniture is really the pièce de résistance. Please pass on my congratulations to everyone involved. We could not be more delighted.”

Bursar, Pembroke College, Cambridge



“Now that we have got the Queen’s visit safely over I have time to write and say what a wonderful job you made of the furniture. It looks totally in keeping . . . and all comment on the quality of both design and manufacture.”

Bursar, Charterhouse School

“Can I express our thanks for the speed and efficiency with which you have delivered this project? Particular thanks must go to your craftsmen and installers who performed so well.”

Project Manager, Liverpool University



Press comments

“You can put a piece of his furniture in any kind of building and after about 10 minutes it looks as if it has been there forever.”

Country Life Magazine

“His designs speak strongly, if quietly, of an English tradition of furniture making that was one of his main inspirations.”

The Times



“All the designs have an Englishness and restraint that makes them infinitely appealing and infinitely usable.”

Financial Times

“Elegant and contemporary yet totally classic.”

House and Garden



“Commendably timeless designs.”

Financial Times

“Understated elegance and restraint.”

The Times

“Products combining 21st century engineering and 18th century craftsmanship.”

Country Life Magazine



Academic clients
All Souls College, Oxford
Atlantic College
Bancroft School
Bedford School
Benenden School
Brasenose College, Oxford
Broomwood Hall School
Bryanston School
Cambridge University Arts Theatre
Cambridge University Boat Club
Cambridge University Botanic Institute
Cambridge University Library
Cambridge University Old Schools
Cambridge University Press
Cambridge University Union Society
Campion Hall, Oxford
Charterhouse School
Christ Church, Oxford
Christ College, Cambridge
Churchill College, Cambridge
Clare College, Cambridge
College of Law
Corpus Christi College, Cambridge
Corpus Christi College, Oxford
Cranleigh School
Darwin College, Cambridge
Downing College, Cambridge
Emmanuel College, Cambridge
Epsom College
Eton College
Giggleswick School
Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge
Green College, Oxford
Harrow School
Harvard University, USA
Highgate School
Hughes Hall, Cambridge
Hurstpierpoint College
Institute of Criminology, Cambridge
Jesus College, Cambridge
Jesus College, Oxford
Keble College, Oxford
King's College, London
Lincoln College, Oxford
Liverpool Hope University
London School of Economics
Marlborough College

Merton College, Oxford
Middlesex University
New College, Oxford
New Hall, Cambridge
Newnham College, Cambridge
Nuffield College, Oxford
Open University
Oundle School
Oxford Centre for Hebrew Studies
Pembroke College, Cambridge
Pembroke College, Oxford
Peterhouse, Cambridge
Rhodes House, Oxford
Robinson College, Cambridge
Royal Academy of Music
Royal Grammar School, Guildford
St Anne's College, Oxford
St Antony's College, Oxford
St Catharine's, Cambridge
St Cross College, Oxford
St Edmund's College, Cambridge
St Edmund Hall, Oxford
St Hugh's College, Oxford
St John's College, Cambridge
St Paul's School
St Paul's Girls' School
St Peter's College, Oxford
Sherborne School
Shrewsbury School
Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge
Stowe School
The King's School Canterbury
The Queen's College, Oxford
Trinity College, Oxford
Trinity Hall, Cambridge
University of Birmingham
University of Chester
University College, London
University College, Oxford
University of Dundee
University of Liverpool
University of Roehampton
University of Warwick
Uppingham School
Wolfson College, Cambridge
Wolfson College, Oxford
Yale University, USA
Yale - National University of Singapore

Institutional clients
Art Workers Guild
Athenaeum Club
Beefsteak Club
British Academy
British Council
British Heart Foundation
British Museum
Buckingham Palace
Delfont Mackintosh Theatres Ltd
Department for Culture, Media & Sport
Eltham Palace
English Heritage
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
Garrick Club
General Medical Council
Geological Society
Hampton Court Palace
Holyrood House
House of Commons
Institute for Government
Institute of Chartered Accountants
Institute of Electrical Engineers
Kew Gardens Herbarium
Kew Palace
London Library
Middle Temple
Ministry of Defence
National Gallery, London
National Gallery of Scotland
National Maritime Museum
Oxford and Cambridge Club
The Paul Mellon Centre, London
Royal Albert Hall
Royal Collection Trust
Royal College of Paediatrics
Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons
Royal Geographical Society
Royal Institute of British Architects
Royal Opera House
Royal Scottish Academy
Royal Society of Arts
Scottish Supreme Court
Society of Antiquaries
Somerset House
Special Air Service Regiment
Tate Modern

The Wallace Collection
Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds
Tower of London
TUC
United Kingdom Supreme Court
Victoria & Albert Museum
Windsor Castle
Worshipful Company of Butchers
Worshipful Company of Carpenters
Worshipful Company of Fishmongers
Worshipful Company of Haberdashers
Worshipful Company of Leathersellers
Worshipful Company of Mercers
Worshipful Company of Skinners

“Products combining 21st century engineering and
18th century craftsmanship.”

Country Life Magazine

