



A Timber Framer's Workshop: Joinery, Design & Construction of Traditional Timber Frames

By Steve Chappell

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This revised edition of *A Timber Framer's Workshop* has over 150 new photos and includes updated engineering specifications for pegged joinery, along with expanded in-depth technical information on the joinery, design and construction of Traditional Timber Frames.

The major portion of *A Timber Framer's Workshop* was first written back in 1983. Over a period of a number of years several revisions and additions took place, as it was used as the handout workshop manual for *Fox Maple Timber Framing Workshops*. At last, it was published for general distribution in 1998.

When this book was first published in 1998, scientific testing results for pegged mortise and tenon joinery simply did not exist. The corollaries that could be made at that time were drawn from testing results for bolted connections. This is common in engineering as the essential physical laws concerning force and motion, primarily Newtonian physics, are symmetrical. However, nothing ever beats a direct test for a specific condition as the results end with an emphatic exclamation point. In the past five or six years testing has at last been carried out for a number of the most common pegged joinery conditions and the results have been published. The impetus for this revision was in large part to update and to include these new testing results so that the readers would be privy to the latest engineering results available for timber frame joinery.

Along the way, over 150 new photos and drawings were added and editorial additions were made to clarify specific conditions, or to more fully explain a critical aspect of timber framing. While the essential book is the same, virtually every element is expanded in some way to paint a more vibrant picture of the technical aspects of how to build a traditional timber frame. In addition, there is an expanded element of color and nuance to help the reader more fully understand the magic of timber framing... and that timber framing really is the Jazz of building.

Illustrated with over 500 photos and CAD drawings.

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Editorial Review

Review

Among owner-builders, the traditional timber frame has been held as a pinnacle of achievement--for its rich history, unsurpassed beauty, and the sense of accomplishment it can offer. As founder and director of Fox Maple School of Traditional Building, Steve Chappell--author of *A Timber Framer's Workshop*--is in a unique position to share the knowledge he's acquired over the past 30 years. The title page says this book has been a work in progress for 15 years. The detail offered in illustrations and explanations supports that completely. Design and engineering make up a good part of this book but it also includes an essential introduction, a section on tools, wood characteristics, and joint details, among many other subjects. The point is, Chappell's 256-page book should not be overlooked if you are serious about timber framing. -- Back Home Magazine, Sept/Oct 1999

Thank you for *A Timber Framer's Workshop*. I have been wanting to add a book like this to Earthwood's Book Catalog for years. Other books in the field are either glossy coffee table fare (pretty to look at, but lacking in hard-core info) or they are not particularly user-friendly. It's great to see a timber framing book which is logically organized for easy extraction of the essential information. We are pleased to add your crisply written textbook to our list. --Rob Roy, Director, Earthwood Building School, October 1999

Throughout the book, Chappell shares an infectious love of the art of timber framing. A journeyman carpenter would be able to cut a timber frame with the information presented in this book...His comprehensive 'Joinery Design', 'Tension Joinery', and 'Roof Framing & Truss Design' sections are technical enough to hand to your engineer, but also comprehensible by the layman --Fine Homebuilding

About the Author

Steve Chappell began his timber framing career in 1970 and has been building, teaching and writing about the craft ever since. As the editor & publisher of *Joiners Quarterly*, *The Journal of Timber Framing & Traditional Building*, Chappell was an early and prominent advocate of timber framing and traditional building during the early days of the revival. The Journal represented the most comprehensive source for timber framing and traditional building information available at that time. Through his calls to unite in *JQ*, the seeds of a guild were laid, and in 1984 co-founded the Timber Framers Guild. As a way of bringing the written information into more tangible use, Chappell founded Fox Maple School of Traditional Building in 1983. The schools campus, in West Brownfield, Maine, currently conducts courses in timber framing and traditional building methods, including traditional clay infill, thatching and progressive natural building systems.

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Excerpt from Introduction

The revival of timber framing over the past 30 years may be one of the most successful attempts ever at reviving an ancient craft and bringing it back into full blossom. Its success, in part, may be due to the fact that it fulfills the requirements of structure in such a pure and direct way, and it naturally inspires and heightens our sense and awareness of craftsmanship. Our reverence for architecture and art stems from an innate human need to see talent expressed. When it is expressed in usable and functional forms, such as buildings that we can live and worship in, we become connected with it in a more intimate way. In an age when technology is expanding at such a rapid pace that today's advances are often obsolete tomorrow, we

yearn for things in life that have substance. Timber framing, by its nature-requiring the touch and the feel of a craftsman's hand, its use of nearly raw materials, and its substantiality-provides a sense of permanence. There is nothing to hide or mask in a joined frame. The work of the craftsman who handled and fitted the joints remains visible-to feel, touch, and to imagine what his days were like cutting the frame. Timber frames remain alive throughout their life, inviting all who will inhabit or enter its space for many generations to come a opportunity to sense the craftsman who worked the timbers. Who among us has not entered an old barn and resisted the temptation to run our palms over the timbers, touch the joints, and in so doing, imagined and felt, in some measure, the presence of the builder within the timbers?

This unique nature of timber framing has inspired many owner-builders to design and build their own timber framed home, and many more to enter the trade professionally. Fueled with inspiration, anyone can accomplish just about anything. However, there is hard work involved, and if one is to be successful, a working understanding of the complete system-structural design, joinery, and a basic understanding of the mechanical and physical properties of wood-is required...

The intent of this workbook is to outline the fundamental approach, coupled with concepts of structural design and joinery, that will allow beginners to develop a strategy that will make their first timber framing project a successful one...

Users Review

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