

## Neil's Personal Profile



I am the middle of three brothers, married to Fiona since 1988 and have a daughter Charlotte (aka Charlie) who shares my love of heavy rock music and a slightly odd sense of humour created around a love of Monty Python and Jake Thackray.

There are those who think I am very formal so they tend to be a bit surprised once they get to know me. My passion for loud screaming guitars and rock festivals is not something you would immediately guess when we first meet as I do enjoy a well-cut suit and a good tie. This summer saw Charlie and I attended the Sonisphere and Download rock music festivals, with Fiona joining us at High Voltage.

Next year we are really excited because Black Sabbath are reforming and playing Download.

Apart from the music I play a few sports: squash, football and golf mainly. I wouldn't claim to be particularly accomplished at any of them, but what I lack in skill I make up for with enthusiasm. I currently play golf at Staverton Park GC near Daventry, Northants and also have the honour of captaining a team for the Royal Warrant Holders Association.

I am extremely proud of the company and its staff. Of course it's a great regret that I can no longer be a regular part of the manufacturing process, but we are now too large a business for me to choose when to become involved, and so I rely heavily on the team's commitment and professionalism. Thankfully my cabinetry skills can still come in useful at home and so it's there, rather than at our workshops, where I now indulge myself.

The advantage of being a larger company is that I can devote some of my time to another of my passions without it being detrimental to the company i.e. promoting skills and training. I currently Chair the National Training Board for Furniture and sit on the Board of Proskills the Sector Skills Council for Process and Manufacturing, as well as working with local schools to promote manufacturing and design as careers.

I feel incredibly privileged in the opportunities and experiences that have come my way since deciding to train as a craftsman. I have visited many wonderful places and met lots of interesting passionate people, many of whom have commissioned some stunning pieces and have since gone on to become friends.

Whilst there have been a few challenges on the way it has been a wonderful journey so far and whilst no one knows what is still to come, I can be reasonably confident that next year at least, we will see Black Sabbath!