

Marquetry Matters



The Quarterly Newsletter of

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No. 246

2019

Editorial

I am afraid that I have been feeling that I'm running at half-speed since last July when my Wife Barbara was diagnosed with a serious illness. Unfortunately the situation has worsened and the prognosis is not good. But the show must go on! But for how long I am not sure.

Hope you enjoy this issue – as always contributions are invited via the three Cs (Criticism, Comment and/or Contributions)!

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Got a Minute or Two (Designed to keep the members informed who are unable to get to the meetings)

There was no January meeting due to renovation work at the Community Centre – so no minutes!

As to February's minutes, whilst showing 14 bits in and 5 bits out of correspondence, there were only a few that I feel are worth recording here:

Expertise Events seem to be keeping us informed. As mentioned a while ago they concentrate on the 'soft' crafts and paper. If only we had more active members it would be good to investigate being part of their action. In the meantime you can check them out at craftevents.com.au. Nevertheless, their 'Exhibitips' may well find its way into the next edition of MM. An interesting philosophy on exhibiting.

The Working With Wood show is to be no longer; it will be the Timber Tools and Artisan Show with the bye-line Learn, Love, Create and, as such, the organisers' plan to extend the show from purely woodworking to a plethora of crafts. If they all partake it should be quite a show: Woodworking is joined by Painting, Sculpting plus School Arts; Luthiering and Instrument Making; Air Brushing and Street Style Art; Metal Sculpting; Glassblowing; Blacksmithing and Blade Smithing; Pottery/Ceramics; Coopering and Leathercraft. What a line-up! Let's hope that the strength of woodworking will not be diluted.

We have been invited to partake in the Whitehorse Manningham Libraries mentorship program, particularly the Adult Learning Week 2019.

In 2019, the program is focussing on a 'match-making' program, where skilled individuals are paired up with an interested participant. Our participation, as the 'skilled individuals', would be (minimum) one, meeting with a participant to discuss the skill in question, any club of relevance, interest in the skill,

a demonstration perhaps, etc.. The aim of the program being to match interested people with locals who have a variety of skills - and provide them with:

1) a meeting of introduction to the skill of interest, and 2) an option to continue development of this skills, whether that be: 2a) one-on-one mentoring as our schedules allow; 2b) an open workshop day for all interested people, or 2c) invitation to established or paid club/classes.

Last year's Skill-Share Fair was about exposure to the unique and interesting skills (and clubs that practise them) in our local area. This year is about getting the public more involved, through a more one-on-one approach.

Very much potential for our membership drive such as it is!

We received another reminder re the forthcoming A4 Arts event which we have regularly dismissed in the past. I really think we should revisit this subject before the next one.

The Xmas Competition subject is 'Sport' (See page 7 for some preliminary ideas!).

Happenings / Shows

The Hand Tool Preservation Association of Australia Inc. hosts the next Hand Tool Market on 5th October 2019.

Melbourne Craft & Quilt Fair July 25 – 28, Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre, South Wharf.

The 2019 Timber Tools and Artisan Show is scheduled to take place at the Melbourne Showgrounds between 23rd and 25th August.

News from other Societies

The Marquetry Society

Continuing my 'catch-up' process on the recently received Marquetarians I have managed to look at the first two of the last three received, namely No. 264 Autumn 2018 and 265 Winter 2018. No. 266 Spring 2019 will have to wait until next time. As usual, I am blown away by the photos of finished works by all manner of people. What incredible quality is being produced these days.

As always the various exec. reports are interesting but, as I've mentioned before, I am a bit 'time-poor' so will only highlight what I think are the most pertinent bits of the journals. You'll just have to get them out of the library to enjoy the full force of them all!

No. 264 Autumn 2018 has an inspiring article on the introduction of marquetry to the people of Bilbao in the Basque Country of Spain. Susan Bart tells us that the locals really had hardly any idea about marquetry until this year when the townhall of Bilbao offered two courses of marquetry as a cultural activity. It would appear that Susan had 12 'students' who have produced some amazing work which appears to be as good as any anywhere. Congratulations Susan on promoting marquetry in that part of the world. I wonder when we can expect to see examples on the MS website!

Then there is a fascinating article on the older times when natural colouring of wood veneers originated from plants, bark and organic sources. The whole subject is described in detail including how to reproduce colours from 'modern' ingredients. I challenge members to have a go!

David Walker's article on Arthritis and Marquetry resonated with me as my hands both seem to be heading that way! I really will have a go at the exercises described – another wonderful read!

There's an interesting 'tit-bit' type of article describing the difference between shellac and cellulose as sanding sealers. On the same page is Part 8 of Veneer Examples - Unusual Figuring which begs the same question each edition: Where on earth would you get such exotic varieties?!

No. 265 Winter 2018 – Middleton Hall and Ghost – what a combination, but most interesting!

Otherwise, 'Framing a Marquetry Picture' is a good little article to have on file for reference.

We get a nice 'rap' along with the American Marquetarian in a piece entitled 'Marquetry Magazines in other Countries. Surely there must be more than three of us, though?!

The Swann Morton scalpel knife gets a 'rap' too. Wonderful to see that little knife still current in marquetry circles. I've had mine for some 50 years!

Part 9 of Veneer Examples - Unusual Figuring continues to amaze me.

And all the usual finished pictures and decorated items – enough to blow your socks off!!

Technical Notes

Not so much 'Notes' as a Technical Article!

The following is reproduced from the UK's Marquetarian No. 238 of Spring, 2011. I have had it on file waiting for a suitable opportunity to include it in our publication as I believe it has a lot going for it, not only as a marquetry challenge but as an incentive to try a 'board game' again and get away from the telly!

Nine Men's Morris

An Ancient Board Game Adapted For Marquetry by Jeff Herbert

When asked to make a Nine Men's Morris Board I had to admit that, apart from a vague recollection of a reference to it in the Shakespeare play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I had no idea what it was.

It is, in fact, a contender for the oddest game in the world. Examples have been found in the masonry work of temple floors, tombs and tunnels of the ancient Egyptians; and the Chinese played the same game dating back to 500 B.C.

In England it was widely played both indoors and outdoors, and 'boards' can be found cut into the seats of the cloisters – where monks spent their relaxation time – in the cathedrals of Norwich, Canterbury, Gloucester and Salisbury.

The board in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey is a rather damaged one, but at Norwich there are several fine examples and the marker points are readily identified as small holes or depressions. Indeed, there are several quite different games marked out in the stonework and a labyrinth (another good marquetry subject) marked out in the grass quadrangle.

Incidentally, though the 'Westminster Abbey Board' is disappointing, the newly restored Cosmetic Pavement Mosaic is most impressive and would present a real challenge to parquetry enthusiasts.

The Nine Men's Morris Board is also more parquetry than marquetry and its construction offers a good exercise in accurate cutting of lines, right angles and mitring of veneer.

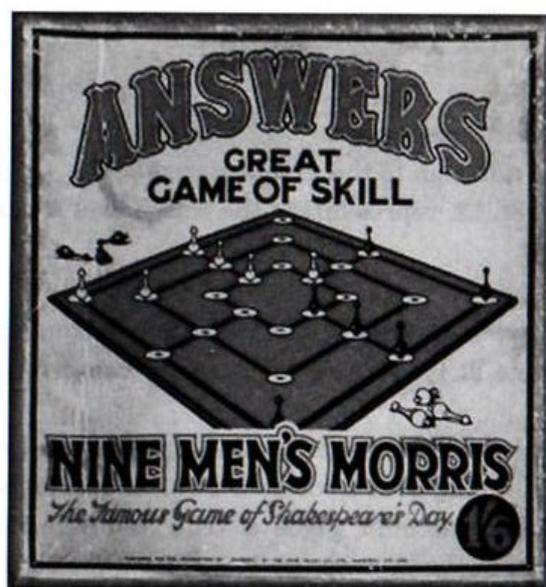
The overall size is a matter of choice – the one shown in Fig 2 (shown on page 19 overleaf) is 300mm square plus a 20mm border – so long as the squares 1, 2 and 3 (Fig 1) are in approximate proportion of $\frac{3}{4} : \frac{1}{2} : \frac{1}{4}$ and there is sufficient space in all positions for the 'men'.

1/. Mark out a piece of sycamore (or other white wood) as in Fig 2, with a registration arrow in each square.

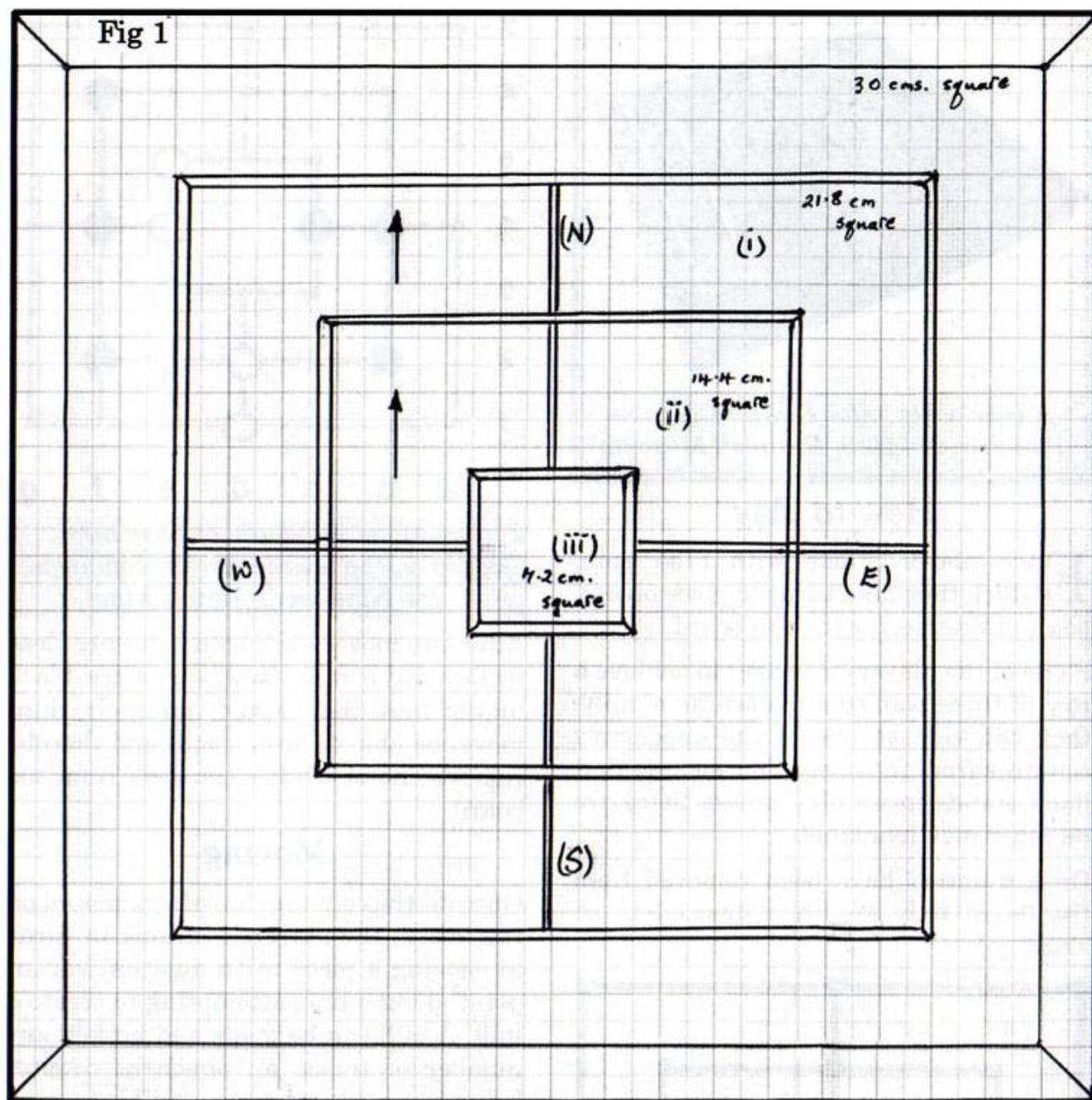
2/. Cut sufficient 3mm strips of American Black Walnut.

3/. Cut out the outermost square (i) and retain.

4/. Tape in the 3mm strips around the four sides of the "window" from



An early commercial version of the game from the 1930's



stage 3/. (page 16) and mitre each corner.

5/. Replace and tape in the square retained from stage 3/. (page 16) and cut to size using the 'window method'.

6/. Proceed as for stages 3/. and 4/. (page 16) for squares (ii) and (iii), again using the 'window method'.

7/. Cut out the 4 strips N, S, E and W and replace with 3mm Black Walnut strip, butt jointed and taped in.

8/. Add a border of choice – mitred all round.

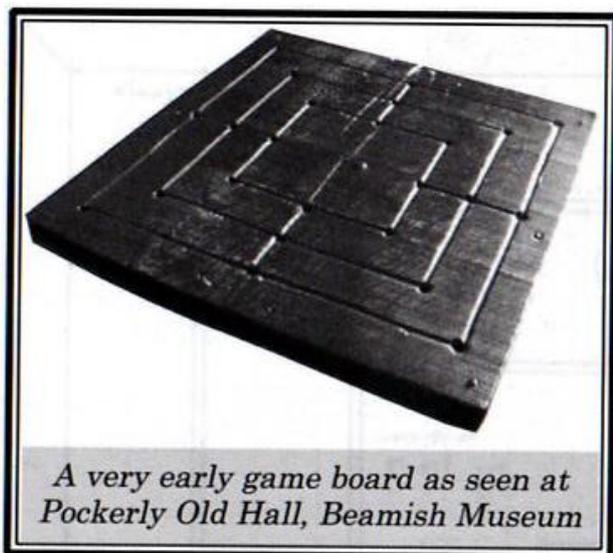
9/. Finish as for any marquetry picture;

add back, edges and then the board. Clean, sand and apply finish of choice.

This then, the intriguing game of Nine Men's Morris dating back many centuries and suitable for all ages.

I'm not sure where it figures in the art versus craft debate, but it does make a useful addition to any games compendium – draught – men acting equally well for Morris Men.

I am grateful for information from Dave Cartright and include the rules for anyone tempted to play after making the board.



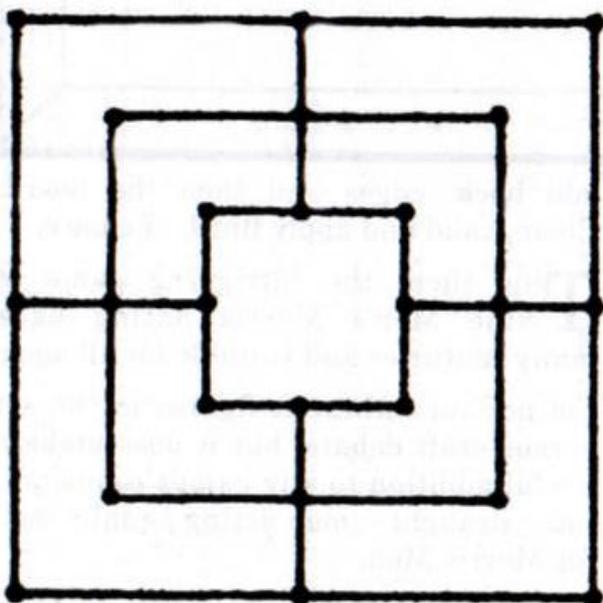
A very early game board as seen at Pockerly Old Hall, Beamish Museum

How to play

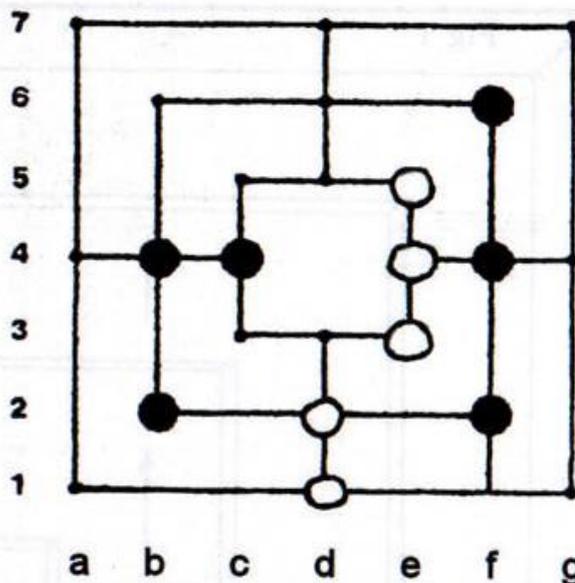
Each player starts with nine men, which they take turns to place on any point of intersection on the board.

If one of the players manages to achieve a row of three counters, known as a 'mill', they can remove one of the opponent's counters from the board, but not one that itself stands in a mill - unless there are no other men available.

Once counters have been removed from the board they are then deemed to be 'dead'.



The blank board without the counters yet being placed in position



And now the counters have been placed on the board ready to commence the Nine Mens Morris game

After two moves each both sides are close to forming a mill. However, since black moves first they would, on their third move, be able to form a mill and thereby remove one of white's counters from the board.

Moving

Once all the counters have been placed on the board, the players continue in turns by moving a piece to an adjacent vacant point along a line, attempting to create a mill. A mill can be made and broken any number of times, an opponent counter being removed each time a mill is formed. It is desirable to set up a double mill, where a counter can move from one mill to another and back again, capturing an opposing counter on each turn.

The hop

This optional move is used to prolong the game. If used, it enables a player with three men left to hop one piece to any point on the board, rather than being restricted to adjacent points. This is a big advantage and often enables a player to regain a great deal of lost ground. Of course, if the opponent is then reduced to three men, they are also entitled to hop.



The winner

The winner is the player who manages to leave their opponent with only two men. If hopping is not allowed, a win can also be achieved by blocking the opponent's men so that they are unable to move.

The photo on the left shows the Nine Mens Morris game located outside the Swan Theatre Stratford-on-Avon, Shakespeare's home of course!

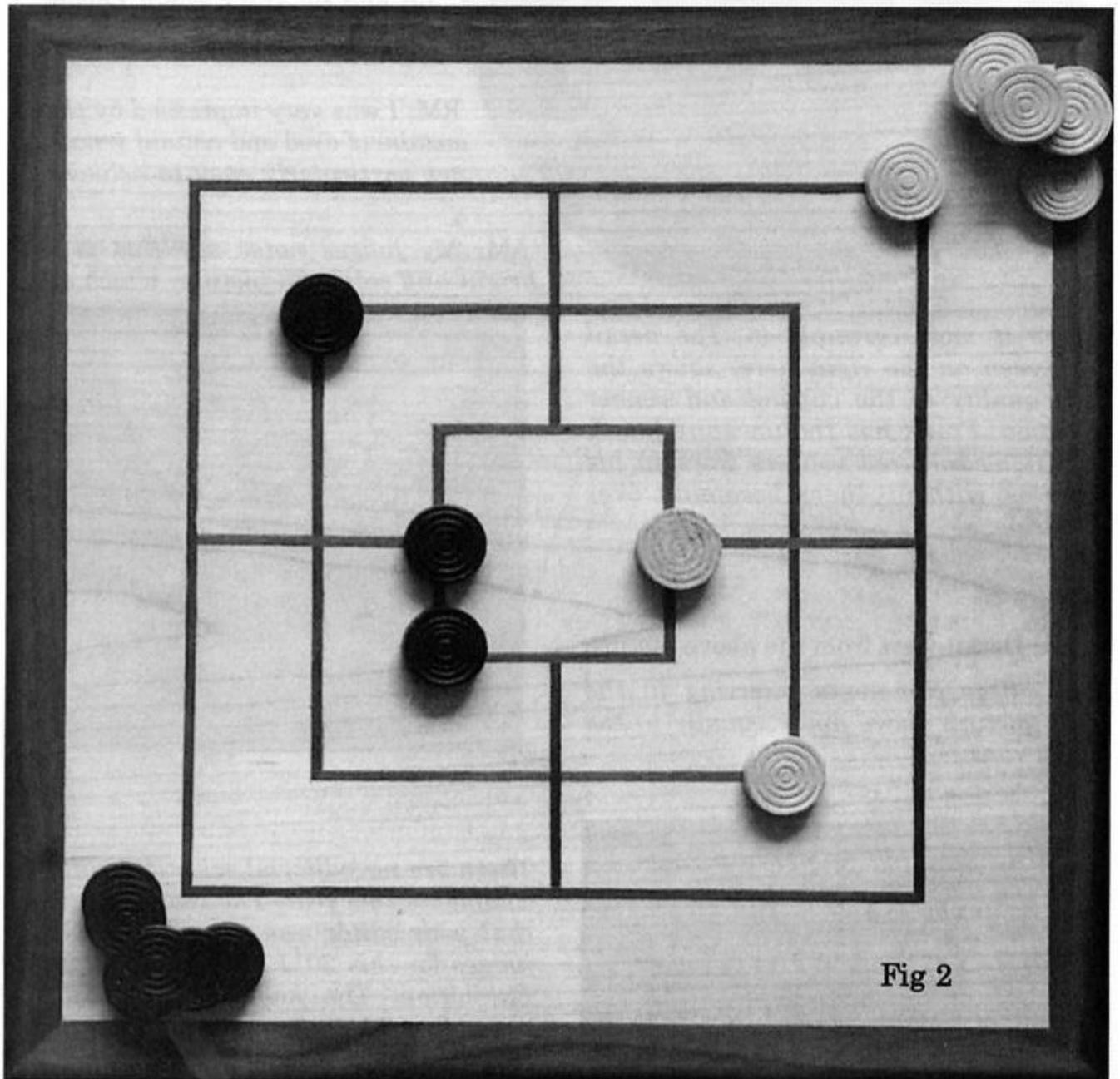


Fig 2

This Month's Design

Some ideas to stimulate you into developing your design for the Xmas Competition – which is 'Sport or Sports':



THE MARQUETRY SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC

The aim of our non-profit Society is to promote and foster interest in the art and craft of marquetry.

Meetings are held at the
Box Hill Community Arts Centre,
Cnr. Combarton and Station Streets, Box Hill,
Melways 47 D11

on the fourth Saturday of the month, 12.30pm to
3.30pm with hands-on workshops on the second
Saturday of the month, same times.

Hands-on workshops are also held on Tuesday
afternoon of each week, 1pm to 3pm, at the
Scout Hall, Cnr. Edith Street and Heathmont Road,
Heathmont. Melways 50-A11

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MEMBERSHIP OF THE SOCIETY

Direct all enquires to the Secretary.
An annual membership fee of \$40 and a
joining fee of \$6 apply.

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MARQUETRY MATTERS

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MEETING & WORKSHOP DATES

coming up

SATURDAY 12.30 to 3.30 P.M.

@ BOX HILL

Workshop	13 th April
Meeting	27 th April
Workshop	11 th May
Meeting	25 th May
Workshop	8 th June
Meeting	22 nd June
Workshop	13 th July