



**The Carpenter's New Guide: A Complete Book of Lines for Carpentry and Joinery; Treating Fully on Practical Geometry, Soffits, Groins, Niches, Roofs, ... Also a Full Exemplification of the Theory**

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*Dr Peter Nicholson*

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Excerpt from *The Carpenter's New Guide: A Complete Book of Lines for Carpentry and Joinery; Treating Fully on Practical Geometry, Soffits, Groins, Niches, Roofs, and Domes, and Containing a Great Variety of Original Designs, Also a Full Exemplification of the Theory and Practice of Every Descri*

To a book intended merely for the use of Practical Mechanics, much Preface is not necessary. It is proper, however, to say, that whatever rules by previous authors have on examination proved to be true and well explained, these have been selected and adopted, with such alterations as a very close attention has warranted for the more easily comprehending them, for their greater accuracy or facility of application; added to these, are many examples which are entirely of my own invention, and such as will, I am persuaded, conduce very much to the accuracy of the work, and to the ease of the workman.

The arrangement of the subjects in this work is gradual and regular, and such as a student should pursue who wishes to attain a thorough knowledge of his profession: and as it is Geometry that lays down all the first principles of building, measures of lines, angles, and solids, and gives rules for describing the various kinds of figures used in buildings; therefore, as a necessary introduction to the art treated of, I have first laid down, and explained in the terms of workmen, such problems of Geometry as are absolutely requisite to the well understanding and putting in practice the necessary lines for Carpentry. These problems duly considered, and their results well understood, the learner may proceed to the theoretical part of the subject, in which Soffits claim particular attention; for, by a thorough knowledge of these, the student will be enabled to lay down arches which shall stand exactly perpendicular over their plan, whatever form the plan may be: on this depends the well executing all groins, arches, niches, &c., constructed in circular walls, or which stand upon irregular bases; wherefore the importance of rightly understanding these I cannot too much insist upon, their construction being so various and intricate, and their uses so frequently required. The two plates of cuneoidal or winding soffits are new, and are constructed in a more simple and more accurate manner: yet this method is only a nearer approximation to truth than the former one; the surface of a conchoid cannot be developed; that is, it cannot be extended on a plane: it is therefore absurd to look for perfection on this subject.

The next subject which regularly presents itself is Groins; for the construction of which there will be found many methods entirely new; and besides the common figures, I have shown many which are difficult of execution, and not to be found in any other author. I have displayed a variety of methods for constructing spherical niches, a form more frequently wanted than the elliptic, which only has yet been explained.

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