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BUSINESS



■ One of the dining tables made by Slate Furniture Works in Codicote. Below: Partners Tom Parker and Ben Rayner

Chance to pot a dinner table with a difference

A Codicote furniture restorer has told the *WHT* how he has taken advantage of the decline in snooker to start an innovative business.

Since late 2012, 46-year-old Tom Parker, of St Giles Road, has been transforming unwanted snooker tables into attractive household furniture from a workshop in Letchworth.

He said: "I have seen the whole cycle. When I left school in 1984 there was a boom in snooker tables. You could not get enough of them."

Over 18 million fans watched the dramatic 1985 World Snooker Championship final between household names Steve Davis and Dennis Taylor, but now the sport is in decline and clubs are shrinking, if not closing.

Mr Parker, and his business partner Ben Rayner, are offered at least 15 unwanted tables a month, providing a rich seam of materials.

He said: "I get this amazing

“The range is inspired by giving these majestic and sometimes very old pieces a new lease of life as beautiful and very durable furniture

Tom Parker

material to work with – the thick slate and the fine oak or mahogany woodwork which can both be used to create unique pieces for both inside and outdoors.

"The products are definitely different and of course 'up-cycling,' as it is termed, is very popular at the moment.

"The range of products we make is inspired by giving these

majestic and sometimes very old pieces a new lease of life as beautiful and very durable furniture.

"Although it is still rarely used for furniture, reclaimed Welsh slate has a look and feel that suits both period and contemporary environments.

"Because it doesn't rot and will maintain its original appearance almost indefinitely, it is also very suitable for outdoor use or in conservatories and summer houses."

The Slate Furniture Works is a sideline for both partners, whose main work is for an antique restoration business in Bedfordshire.

Many of their products are designed to a customer's specification, but they hope to persuade shops to stock them.

→ Prospective customers can learn more at www.slatefurnitureworks.com or email tom@slatefurnitureworks.com

