

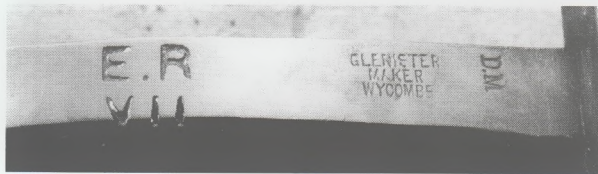
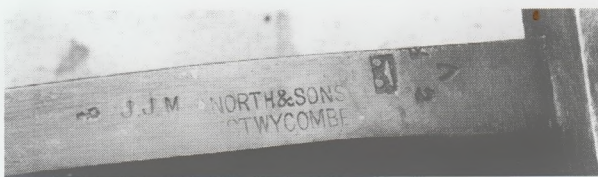
MARKED VERNACULAR FURNITURE

In his recent publication, *'The Pictorial Dictionary of Marked London Furniture'*, Christopher Gilbert placed special emphasis not only on the variety and purpose served by various forms of markings, but highlighted the necessity for more extensive field work to record provincial markings. To this end, diligent searchers for such material, amongst our membership, are invited to supply examples of marked vernacular furniture for future newsletters. A special section has been set aside by the editor and preliminary material, which is published in this edition, has provided an encouraging start.

1.0 CONTRACT FURNITURE



Fig. 7



Figs. 8 and 9 Two identical Windsor Chairs (Fig. 7), with the individual markings of NORTH & SONS (Fig. 8) and GLENISTER (Fig. 9) makers in the Wycombe area of Buckinghamshire have recently been recorded. Photographs courtesy of Mary Roofe Antiques, 1 Stonemasons Court, Parchment Street, Winchester.

Ernest Denton has supplied a number of comments on these chairs.

'These two chair seats display several marks applied by both stamping and branding. The brand marks E. R VII and G R V were burned into the backs of the seats with a hot branding iron and these tell us these chairs were made under government contract during the reigns of Edward VII and George V. Often, contracts for items such as school chairs would have been awarded to several makers, over several years, and to the same design.'

The makers names have been struck using metal stamps. Other marks could have been those applied to identify individual makers, or sub contractors, but stamping was certainly used, in the 1950's by government inspectors to indicate items they had examined when checking contract compliance. Distinctive brands were used for different government departments often incorporating a crown and a monarch mark.

Our Archivist tells that when apprenticed to the Wycombe chair trade in the 1950s, one of his first tasks was to burn Air Ministry brand marks into the back rails of chairs for the R.A.F. and burn similar into the oak rails for Ecclesiastical Chairs for St Clement Danes Church. At that time the branding was done using electrically heated plates supplied for the contract. Later, when making complete chairs himself, he stamped them with his own mark.'

Clearly, these marks are an aspect that would repay further study.

2.0 MARRIAGE INITIALS 1739



Fig. 10 Small oak built-in wall cupboard from Cumbria of unusual interest, the single panelled door showing painting of tulips and other flowers below 'marriage' initials and date. Original hinges and lock. Size: 74x59cm overall. Single shelf inside, replaced. Photo by willing permission of Dave Howarth, Punch Bowl Inn, Underbarrow near Kendal. Recorded by Barbara Pearce.

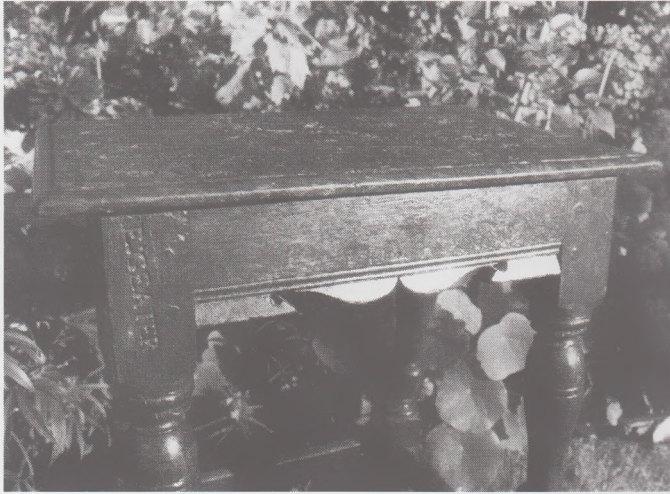


Fig. 11 17th century oak stool

Photograph courtesy of Key Antiques, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire.

V. Chinnery suggests that in most instances such brand marks represent ownership references, and have often been employed to assist inventory formulation (Oak Furniture, The British Tradition, A.C.C. Ltd, 1979). Members maybe familiar with other examples of furniture branded with initials or a name which can be readily associated with a family ownership. Such information would form part of a database which in the long term could be analysed and published in a comprehensive format.



Fig. 13

4.0 FROM A VICARAGE IN NORTH CHESHIRE.

A recent furniture dispersal from a vicarage in North Cheshire included a number of stained chairs (Figs. 12 and 13) which are stamped C. LEICESTER (Fig. 14). Such origins suggest the type of historic customer base for chairs made in the workshop of Charles Leicester during the period 1810 to 1858.

P.H.



Fig. 12

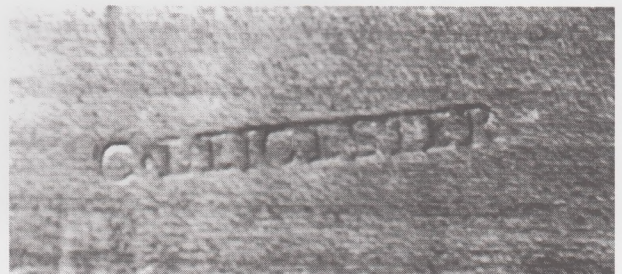


Fig. 14