

A LANCASTER CHAIRMAKERS GOODS AND CHATTELS 1805

Henry Smorthwaite
 ag^t
 vs. John Nightingale } Court 7th February 1805. It is Ordered
 the Court that unless the Defendant appear and put in
 good bail to this action within fourteen Days from the
 next date shall be none of the following Goods and
 Chattels, to wit. In the Shop, Ten Childrens Chairs Ten
 Chairs twenty two Rush Bottom Chairs six Shuttles and
 pair of Gears. In the House, Clock and Case, Larder Cup
 Snap Staw, Eight Chairs, Foot Table, Window Seat,
 Iron Pan and other articles. First Room third & 4th two
 and half of Camp Bedsteads, Feather Bed and Bedding
 and sitting Post. Second Room two Chest Beds two Pair
 Bedsteads and Bedding for two Beds one Chair and sundry
 articles. Work Shop two Lathes and set of Tools, a pair
 of unfinished chairs, Ash and Elm Bats and sundry piece
 of Woods - Yard Two Pigs of the Goods of the said Day.
 By the Court
 Smorthwaite.

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Fig. 12 Extract from the Lancaster Borough Court rule book 1784-1822 'Recognizances for bail'

The section of Henry Smorthwaite against John Nightingale, provides us with an interesting glimpse of the premises of a provincial chairmaker. Nightingale was probably the chairmaker who took on an apprentice in 1797, and may be the same John Nightingale who was working in Preston by 1818, (DEFM) especially if he could not resolve his financial difficulties in Lancaster. He appears to have made shuttles for the local cotton mills as well as "rush bottom chairs". His inventory of domestic furniture is headed by his "clock and case", usually the most expensive piece of furniture, then his "Corner Cupboard" a favourite item of furniture in Lancashire and one illustrated by Gillows with various pediments, the best sort being bowfronted and made in mahogany. Notice too the variety of beds and the fact that most were made to fold away such as the pair of "Camp Bedsteads". Where rooms were limited and families large they must have allowed living space to be used for sleeping at night. An engraving of the Debtors Rooms in Lancaster Gaol in 1836 (where the hard pressed John Nightingale may well later have been imprisoned) depicts the bed which answered this description. The two "Chest Beds" in the second room had a long history of manufacture in the town. Gillows were making and illustrating such items by the mid 18th century. If the "Two Pigs of the Goods" refer to the four legged variety, then once again Nightingale was typical of many townsfolk who kept pigs in back yards and even in the kitchen, which were fattened on household scraps before forming the Sunday roast themselves.