



Cover illustration: 'Reading the Exeter Gazette', signed by James Leakey/1838/Exeter

With the usual caveats, this oil on panel can provide some useful information for the furniture historian. The first item to catch the eye is the hat of the tradesman. A paper cap of this type is often shown in depictions of woodworkers of various trades. The apron and breeches as well as the hat appear in plate number 57 in Cunnington and Lucas 'Occupational Costume in England', circa 1843 described as the costume of a carpenter. The rope bag in the foreground upon which the spaniel sleeps, is similar to that in plate number 58 which illustrates the typical outfit of a carpenter in 1867. The saw in the bag is comparable to one in Smiths 'Key' of 1816, which has the handle of either a carcass or dovetail saw (see *A History of Woodworking Tools* by W L Goodman plate no. 50)

The chair upon which the carpenter is seated poses further questions of identification. Similarities exist with Wycombe chairs as advertised by Walter E. Ellis c 1875, Edwin Skulls 'Catalogue of c.1849 and the c.1860 catalogue of Benjamin North (refer to extracts in 'The Regional English Chair' B.D.Cotton). The main problem is in matching the very common empire influenced top rail to known designs which I am sure could be achieved with a more detailed study. The lack of turned detail on the visible rear leg may be a unique feature or perhaps artistic licence.

It would have been more satisfactory to match any of the furniture to the South West Region but as researchers know, matters are rarely so straightforward. Is the round table with cabriole legs together with a shaped apron, unique or characteristic of tables made in this region?

USEFUL REFERENCES

'Occupational Costume in England from the Eleventh century to 1914' by Phillis Cunnington and Catherine Lucas, published 1919 by Adam and Charles Black, London.

'The Complete Book of Trades by Whittock, Bennett and Badcock' 1842.

Cover illustration of Newsletter No. 21 'A carpenter's workshop' painted in 1858 by James Hayllar

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