

## THE RE-BIRTH OF THE CORNISH WINDSOR

In 1997 the Cornish woodlands belonging to the Duchy of Cornwall, under the management of their Head Forester, Geraint Richards, were certified as being 'sustainably managed' as defined by the international Forest Stewardship Council. One of the Duchy's ambitions is to use their home-produced timber in furniture-making, possibly in making 'Cornish furniture'. A local firm, Rawnsley Woodland Products, run by Tino Rawnsley, a traditional furniture-

maker, was interested in the scheme, and Tino researched the possibility of finding and reproducing traditional Cornish furniture.

Tino was advised to contact Bill Cotton and was surprised to learn of the Cornish chair designs in the study collection, and even more delighted to find that there is a repertoire of Cornish case furniture also. After visiting the Study Centre at Wycombe, Geraint and Tino decided to make a prototype replica Cornish chair, copying the highly provenanced James Eathorne bow-back Windsor (James Eathorne, fl. 1847-1856, was a cooper and chairmaker in Penzance). Tino and Geraint spent a day at Lechlade discussing construction and timber conversion techniques and measuring and photographing the chair, as well as lengthy and sometimes heated but good natured discussions on the ethical issues concerned in the production of replica furniture. Many cups of coffee later, Geraint and Tino returned to Cornwall, armed with sufficient information to produce a 'Penzance Windsor'.

In the meantime, the Duchy Board were looking for a way to mark the 30th anniversary of HRH Prince Charles' title as Duke of Cornwall. They decided that Tino's Cornish Windsor chair would fit that purpose ideally, and accordingly, the first replica Penzance chair was produced in an amazingly short time, brought to Lechlade for Bill to see, and then it went on to Highgrove to be given to HRH on November 14th, his birthday, along with a signed copy of 'The English Regional Chair'. It was apparently well received!

The replica (fig.17) was largely hand made, in ways as close as possible to the original, using the same timbers; as, elm and sycamore. It was left unstained, just sealed and waxed although the original was painted with red lead paint and later over-painted with black varnish. It is interesting to speculate how Tino's chair will appear in 150 years time. James Eathorne, I'm sure would have been astonished to have known the interest shown in the product of his off-season occupation 150 years later.

*B.D. Cotton*



**Fig. 17 Cornish Windsors: replica alongside the Eathorne chair**