

AN UNUSUAL JOINT

I am grateful to Gabriel Olive and to John Boram for their comments in response to my question in Newsletter no. 30 about the pair of elm side chairs with through tenons at the backs of the side seat-rails. This is, of course, a way of easing the problem of gauging the positioning of a concealed mortice-and-tenon joint where, on chairs of this period, the side-rails meet the back at an angle and in a different plane. However, even on some very sophisticated chairs it is found as a design feature.

Gabriel has recalled one chair of generally rather crude construction, which turned up in the Somerset/Dorset area and had through-tenons in this position. John has noted that through-tenons of this type were a common feature of mid-eighteenth century chairs made in Philadelphia and Bermuda in particular. However in both places it was normal to peg through the back-posts to secure both the back and side-rail tenons. This is not the case on the British chairs. One feature which I mentioned but did not show in the first note, was the unusual scalloping (figs 9 and 10) at the top of the splat beneath the top-rail. I wonder if anyone has noted this before?

Christopher Claxton Stevens

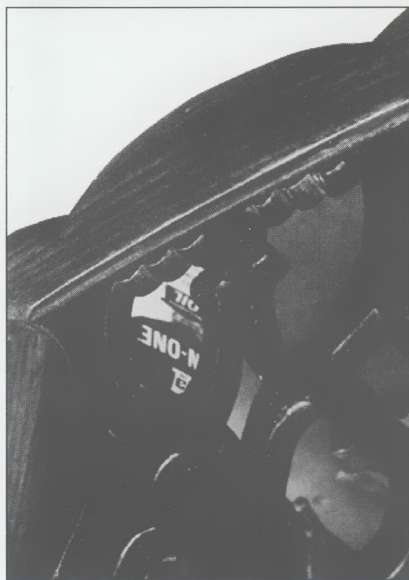


Fig. 9



Fig. 10