

## THE SPARANCK WINDSOR

The existence of two 18th century comb-back Windsor chairs with trade labels identifying their makers is well-known to members of the RFS. However, the discovery of a third such chair, bearing possibly original (branded?) makers initials beneath the seat, on a recent BBC 'Antiques Roadshow' prompts this short article about a fourth marked chair known to the author. This comb-back example is possibly of a slightly later date as it has square section crook arm supports instead of vertical laths. The chair (fig 18) which appears to be of fruitwood and ash, with the usual broad elm seat, has a relatively low back with a vase-shaped splat, four cabriole legs and an 'arrow-head' central stretcher; the underside of the seat has a series of ridges, probably caused by adzing.

The chair is stamped in the centre on the rear edge of the seat, a place where 19th century maker's marks are often found. Interestingly though, it is also less clearly stamped on the back of the cresting rail in the centre. The spacing of the letters is uneven and may be the same in both places. The letters, which are in capitals, are as follows:- "SPARANCK" (fig 19). Unfortunately, all attempts to attribute any significance to this sequence, so far, have failed. Since the chair is double stamped, the possibility arises that the letters are some form of inventory mark (naval, military, institutional), rather than a maker's mark. This information is given in the hope that readers might have some helpful suggestions!

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**Fig. 18** Comb back Windsor chair with cabriole legs and arrow-head central stretcher



**Fig. 19** Pencil rubbings of the Sparanck stamp