

A strange little oak chair

Much of the carving on this chair seems typically 17th century, but I am curious about (what I may incorrectly call) 'double axe-head' carving between the three roses on the cresting rail. Does this typify a particular period or geographical region? The chair shows all signs of having been cobbled together from previously used pieces. There is no sign of glue on the joints, which, though now very loose, were most likely draw-bored mortise and tenons. I believe this indicates the chair was constructed in the 17th century, rather than as a 19th century antiquarian whim, but I'd like to hear views on this. The dimensions are: overall height, 34 in.; top rail 23 in. long and 4in deep; seat 13in. high, 13in. deep and 22in. wide across the front (to the outside of the arm supports). The arms are set at a comfortable height for an adult.

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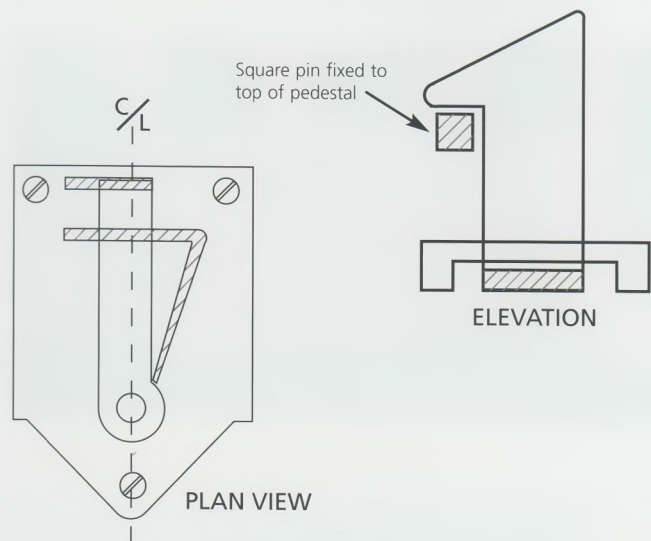
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The predecessor of the banjo catch?

A few months ago an oak tilt-top pedestal table came into my workshop. The mid-Wales client knows it has been in the family for at least a couple of generations, and it is most likely to be a Welsh country piece. The design of the primitive spring catch was new to me. However, in the next month, also in mid-Wales, I came across two more round, tilt-top pedestal tables, both a little larger than my client's 29½ in. diameter table, but with the same design of iron catch. Is this catch, illustrated below, confined to Welsh country furniture? Is it the immediate predecessor of the banjo catch? Does anybody have any idea of the date when it was in use?

The plan drawing is to scale, with the plate 1⅞ in. across the top, and 2 in. deep down the straight sides. The tapered portion at the bottom is ⅜ in. deep. The hatched, narrow strips are the vertically standing parts, shown in the elevation view. The top of the central vertical strip, swivelling at the round base, can be moved sideways to the right. The spring, which is the angled thin strip running down to the junction between the straight edge of the catch and its rounded anchor part, returns the catch to the vertical. Similarly to a banjo catch, the top of the table can be folded down into its horizontal position,



on to the pedestal, and the spring-loaded component is pushed aside. In the case of this simple iron catch the square section 'pin' does the pushing, and latches under the spring-loaded strip.

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