

Lincolnshire Spinning Wheel

The chair makers of Lincolnshire were quite happy to advertise themselves as makers of chairs but many also stated that they were makers of bowls, fancy chairs, pin chairs, spinning wheels and screw threads for presses. I have searched for many years without success for these other items in the hope that one would surface at a local auction with a makers name on it, like the Windsor chairs.

Recently I was invited into a house of an elderly gentleman in Grantham (that used to be in Little Gonerby before it got merged with the borough of Grantham) so I could record two very early rustic chairs. During the discussion I mentioned that no spinning wheels have ever been found with the stamp of a Lincolnshire chair maker whereupon my host stated that he thought he might have one elsewhere in his house. I have to admit that I was so engrossed in his chairs that I paid no heed to this remark

and did not even follow it up. Just imagine my astonishment when he rang me up a few days later to say he had found the wheel with ASHTON SPILSBY stamped on it. I returned to his house where he let me record it photographically.

Although it is incomplete, this find represents only the second spinning wheel ever found signed by a chair maker.

Bill Cotton deserves praise for tracking down the makers of rush-seated chairs of Lincolnshire to the Ashton, Green and Spikens families. This spinning wheel is clearly signed by S ASHTON and must relate to Samuel Ashton who was born into the family of chair makers in 1826 and lived on Back Lane, Spilsby.

Adam Bowett has identified the wood used as bird cherry – *Prunus padus*.

William Sergeant



Fig. 1 (left) The vertical spinning wheel from Lincolnshire. The maker's stamp is impressed onto the end of the turned horizontal bar, just above the driving wheel

Fig. 2 (right) Detail of the maker's stamp S. ASHTON / SPILSBY