

Leicestershire Windsor Chairs – Howes That?

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INTRODUCTION

Dr B. D. Cotton's *The English Regional Chair* lists about two hundred chairmakers and turners in Leicestershire and Rutland.¹ In 1990 this represented a substantial increase on the twenty nine Leicestershire and Rutland chairmakers listed in 1976 by Pauline Agius, who covered a shorter span and whose sources were mainly confined to directories.² Even amongst so many makers, the only Leicestershire maker to whose workshop a chair could firmly be attributed by Dr Cotton was William Rowe of Hallaton.³ All the locations mentioned in this article are underlined in red on a map of Leicestershire (Figure 1).⁴



1 Map of Leicestershire, H. Moll 1724–39.

¹ Cotton (1990), pp. 469–71.

² Agius (1976), p. 2 (four makers) p. 5 (eight) p. 6 (seven) and p. 15 (ten).

³ Cotton (1990), p. 135, the chair at Figure NE 114 and the stamp at NE 115.

⁴ Herman Moll from his *A New Description of England and Wales* (London: 1724–53), also published under the title *A Set of Fifty New and Correct Maps of England & Wales*. The inclusion of a plate number (26) dates this example to between 1724 and 1739. Information courtesy of Richard Warner, Welland Antique Maps and Prints.



2 (left) Low Windsor armchair stamped 'HOWES'. © Gildings Auctioneers

3 (right) Detail of 'HOWES' stamp. © Gildings Auctioneers

JOSHUA HOWES — A PREVIOUSLY UNRECORDED LEICESTERSHIRE WINDSOR CHAIRMAKER

A chair appeared at auction in Gildings of Market Harborough, Leicestershire in July 2019. Enlarging the sale photograph (Figure 2) revealed a possible stamp at the rear of the seat of the chair, the legs of which had plainly been cut down. A request to the auctioneer resulted in (Figure 3). The word 'HOWES' is clear. Further enquiries with the auctioneer revealed that the chair came from a house in the county as part of a probate sale. The chair was acquired by the author. It has a distinctive upper splat with a stylised five-piercing fleur-de-lys of delicate fretwork, narrow at the top but of wider proportions in the middle than many, set in quite a narrow-set back bow, tapered at the terminal where it is mortised to the arm bow, in the manner common in the East Midlands, with a scribe line round the back bow.⁵ The particular stylised fleur-de-lys splat was naggingly familiar.

Research unearthed two chairs of such similar features that they must have been made in the same workshop. One was sold by David Swanson Antiques some years ago, described as 'of quirky proportions' (Figure 4). The other is courtesy of the Robert Hirschhorn Collection (Figures 5, 6, and 7). The latter chair in yew, fruitwood and elm has survived in the best condition of all three chairs. Its dimensions are: 37½ inches

⁵ For a comparator East Midlands five-piercing fleur-de-lys splat, see Sergeant and Parker (2019), p. 93 Figure 4 or Cotton (1990), p. 114, Plate 20.



4 (top left) Similar Windsor armchair.
© David Swanson



5 (top right) Similar Windsor armchair. © Robert Hirschhorn and John Hall



6 (bottom left) Similar Windsor armchair — rear view. © Robert Hirschhorn and John Hall



7 (bottom right) Similar Windsor armchair — detail of arm bow, seat, leg turnings and stretcher. © Robert Hirschhorn and John Hall

(95.3 cm) high, 21 ¼ inches (54 cm) wide at the arms and the seat is 15 ¼ inches (38.7 cm) deep.

All three chairs have three long sticks either side of the splat, four short sticks on each side under the arm bow and crook underarm supports. Each has a fairly thick bell-shaped elm seat, deeply dished with carefully sculpted seat saddle, with a scribe line around the edge.⁶ The legs all have a ring and concave turning at the top and a lower ring, braced in each case by a crinoline stretcher and two spurs.

⁶ Scribe lines round back bows and seat edges are uncommon in late eighteenth/early nineteenth century Lincolnshire Windsor chairs. They are commoner in the Retford and Nottinghamshire tradition from c. 1800 onwards.

So who was Howes? The only Howes in Dr B. D. Cotton's index of makers is one William Howes, listed under 'Cabinet & Chair Makers' in Pigot's *Directory* 1822 at Wymondham, Norfolk. That seemed a little late and slightly too far away from Leicestershire. The *Dictionary of English Furniture Makers 1660–1840* offered two other possibilities:

Howes, —, address unrecorded. The impressed mark 'HOWES' is recorded on two Windsor chairs, the style and construction of which resemble chairs known to have come from the Thames Valley. [Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, Co. Durham; *Furn. Hist.*, 1978, pl. 55a]⁷

Howes, George, Leicester, cm (1826). App. to his father, possibly Joshua Howes of Leicester (1789–1815, D); and admitted freeman in 1826, of Birmingham. [Leicester freemen rolls]⁸

In a *Furniture History* article in 1978, Thomas Crispin wrote:

UNCHARTED NAMED WINDSOR CHAIRS

... HOWES PLATE 55A. Mark impressed. REF: None. SOURCE: Thames Valley?

and at plate 55A:

... Pair of Windsor chairs impressed 'HOWES' late eighteenth century, Thames Valley area.

Plate 55A, in the light of what is now understood about regional Windsor chair construction techniques, does not support a firm conclusion of a Thames Valley origin. The plate shows, from the three-quarter angle from the rear, two comb back armchairs of overall construction very similar indeed to the three chairs illustrated here (Figures 2 to 7) and possibly identical from the arm bow downwards. Both chairs have three long sticks either side of a stylised five-piercing fleur-de-lys splat under the comb, four short sticks on each side under the arm bow and crook underarm supports. Each has a fairly thick seat, the full detail of which cannot be seen. The legs all have a ring and concave turning at the top and a lower ring, braced in each case by a crinoline stretcher and two spurs. It is impossible to know whether the splats are a single splat rebated into the arm bow (a joint common in the Thames Valley) or are two-piece splats mortised into a letterbox mortice within the arm bow (a joint common in the East Midlands). The author's money, however, is on the latter. It is also of note that the splats are fretted with stylised fleur-de-lys: such designs are overwhelmingly associated with chairs made in the East Midlands and Yorkshire and very rarely in the Thames Valley (or any other region).⁹

⁷ It is a mystery why the *Dictionary of English Furniture Makers* refers to the Bowes Museum. No reference appears in Crispin. The Bowes Museum Library and Archive confirmed to the author that the chairs are not in the collection there but suggested that the photograph reproduced by Crispin might have originated with a former curator.

⁸ Beard (1986), p. 456.

⁹ Cotton (1990) has no instances of figures of chairs featuring stylised fleur-de-lys fretted splats (as opposed to Prince of Wales's feathers) in Chapter 2 (The Thames Valley and the Chilterns). Chapter 3 (The North East Region) includes forty four in the Lincolnshire section, thirty three in the Nottinghamshire section, and nine in the Yorkshire section. No instances occur in Chapters 4 to 7 (covering East Anglia, South West Region, West Midlands and North West Region).

Turning to the second entry about George Howes and his father Joshua, rather more progress has proved possible. *The Universal British Directory* (1791) for Leicester has an entry 'Howes, Jolhua, Victualler, Southgate-ft.'¹⁰ Weston's 1794 *Leicester Directory* shows 'Howes, Joshua Blue-Boar Inn, High-crofs-ft.S.' under cabinet makers. One John Howes appears at the same address under carriers to Bristol. At Old Coal Yard, Gallow-tree-gate, Howes is listed under 'Innkeepers who take in horses and teams'. By oversight he was omitted from the primary list and therefore made a late appearance in 'The Appendix' under innkeepers: 'Blue Boar, Howes, Jolhua, (and Cabinet-maker.)'¹¹ A man of broad interests. In Fowler's 1815 *Leicester Directory* 'Howes Joshua, cabinet maker, Old Coal-yard' appears.¹²

Primed thus, genealogical research has revealed the following. In the 1841 census for the parish of Evington, a little more than a mile from the centre of modern Leicester, is Joshua Howes aged about 70, not born in Leicestershire, cabinet maker. In the 1851 census he is 98 years old, born in Garboldisham, Norfolk, formerly farmer and innkeeper and living in the household headed by his son-in-law, William Read, cabinet maker, 58, married to Sarah (née Howes), 59, with their three adult children.¹³

Joshua was the son of John Howes the Elder (1721–1795, baptised 9 July 1721, Garboldisham)¹⁴ and Sarah Kirke or Kirk (d. 1803). They were married in St John's, Garboldisham, on 19 August 1756.¹⁵ Joshua was baptised on 17 February 1758.¹⁶ So by the 1841 census he was closer to 83 than 70. By the 1851 census he may have added a few years but he was at least 93. His parents had two other children: Ann Howes (1761–1817) who later married Samuel Johnson, a Leicester glover, and John Howes the Younger (1764–1825), who became a carrier in Leicester doing the run to Bristol and back from his brother's inn. What prompted the Howes to leave Garboldisham is unclear. At some point after the baptism of John the Younger on 2 October 1764, the family moved to Leicestershire.

Joshua Howes was apprenticed on 15 June 1773 to Joseph Eyre of Swithland, Leicestershire, cabinet maker,¹⁷ for seven years from 10 June 1773 for a premium of £18 with duty thereon of 9s. He cannot long have completed his indentures when he himself, on 14 August 1780, as master cabinet maker of Swithland, took as his apprentice George Lewitt, for seven years from 29 September 1779, for a premium of £6 6s. with duty of 6s. 4d.¹⁸

On 15 February 1785 at St Mary and All Saints', Chesterfield, Derbyshire, Joshua Howes of the parish of Whitland, Leicestershire (a mistranscription of Swithland —

¹⁰ Barfoot (1791), Volume III, p. 598.

¹¹ Weston (1794), p. 8, p. 9, p. 19 and p. 52.

¹² Fowler (1815), p. 29 and p. 52.

¹³ Note on genealogical sources: the author maintains publicly-available family trees of chairmakers on Ancestry.co.uk under the user profile Julian Parker where detail of the genealogical evidence which supports this article may be found. Some data shown there are input after being located on findmypast.co.uk.

¹⁴ Norfolk Record Office, BT ANF 1721–22.

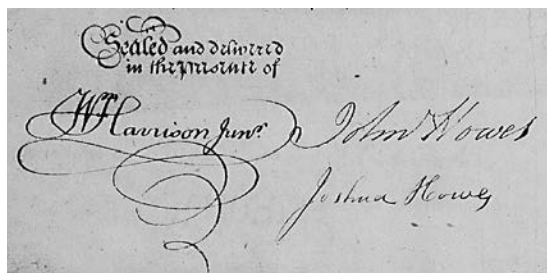
¹⁵ Norfolk Record Office, PD 197/4.

¹⁶ Norfolk Record Office, PD 197/2.

¹⁷ On 13 October 1756 in an apprenticeship record, National Archives IR 1/52f 196 line 16, Eyre is described as 'Joyner'. In a 18 July 1763 apprenticeship record, National Archives IR 1/54 f 220 line 26, he is described as 'Cabt. maker'; and National Archives, IR 1/58 f 146 line 22.

¹⁸ National Archives, IR 1/61 f 198 line 3.

- 8 Signatures of Joshua and John Howes
 — © Record Office for Leicestershire,
 Leicester & Rutland, Leicestershire
 Marriage Licences, 1604–1891



the marriage bond reads Swithland) married Mary Massey (c. 1753–1829) in her home parish.¹⁹ Their first two children were Charlotte Kent (b. 1785), and John Kirk (1787–1828), whose occupation is unknown. John Howes also married a Massey: Elizabeth, at St Mary's de Castro, Leicester, on 9 December 1793. Their marriage bond bears the signatures of both brothers (Figure 8).²⁰

Joshua Howes and Mary Massey's second son, George Massey Howes (1789–1870) was baptised on 13 January 1789 at St Peter's, Mountsorrel, Leicestershire.²¹ George Howes became a cabinet maker like his father, but had moved to Birmingham by the time of his marriage in October 1811, which is unlikely to have been more than a year or so after he finished his apprenticeship. He remained in Birmingham for the rest of his life. In the 1826 Leicester Poll Book, he is recorded as a non-resident voter and cabinet maker in Birmingham.²² In each of the censuses of 1841, 1851 and 1861 his occupation was cabinet maker. By 1862 he was described as a coach builder and by 1868 as a carriage builder.²³

John Howes the Elder died in June 1795.²⁴ His will, in which he is described as a victualler, makes bequests to his wife and three children:

I give and devise unto my dear and loving wife Sarah Howes All that my Messuage or Tenement with the Outhouses, Yards, Garden and Appurtenances situate standing lying and being in the Parish of St Margarets in Leicester aforesaid and now in my own occupation and also all that my Little Close or Ground inclosed lying in the said Parish of St Margarets between two certain Lanes called Millstone Lane and Hang-Man Lane and now also in my own occupation and also all that my freehold Estate situate standing lying and being at Garboldisham in the County of Norfolk now in the Tenure or Occupation of — Morris and all other my real Estate whatsoever and wheresoever ...

His widow was left a life interest until she died or re-married upon which John the Elder left his house to Joshua with a request to pay his sister Ann £100, the Little Close to John the Younger with a similar request and the Garboldisham property to Ann, the residue to be shared equally between all three children.²⁵ Sarah Howes died

¹⁹ Derbyshire Record Office, St Mary and All Saints' Church, Chesterfield Parish Register.

²⁰ Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland, Leicestershire Marriage Licences, 1604–1891.

²¹ Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland, DE1250/4.

²² *Leicester Poll Book*, 1826, p. 70.

²³ Slater (1862), p. 66; and Kelly (1868), p. 237.

²⁴ The St Margaret's Church, Leicester burial register entry on 21 June 1795, four days after he made his will spells him 'John House'.

²⁵ Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland, PR/T/SMP/619-794.

intestate in 1803 and her administration was carried out by Joshua Howes, Innkeeper and John Howes, Carrier.²⁶

Joshua Howes held periodic wood sales. From the *Leicester Journal*, 2 February 1810:

Valuable Oak, Ash, and Elm Timber, Mahogany Planks, Bed Posts, Square, &c.

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,

By Mr. DAVIS,

On Tuesday February 6, 1810, on the Premises at the Old Coal Yard, London Road, Leicester;

FORTY large and useful Oak, Ash and Elm Trees, in Lots, fit for immediate Use. Also several Lots of Bed Posts and Squares, several Planks of valuable Mahogany, well seasoned, and of a superior Quality, Sattin Wood, Veneers and a Quantity of Oak Boards, &c &c,

Sale to begin in the Morning at 10 o'Clock.

A better Opportunity seldom offers to the Trade, and may be viewed by applying on the Premises.

Also,

TO BE SOLD BY PRIVATE CONTRACT,

About One Thousand Yards valuable Building Ground adjoining the Premises of Mr. Miles, Coachmaker, London Road, Leicester. To treat for the same apply Mr. JOHN EDWYN, Leicester, or Mr. HOWES, at the Old Coal Yard.

[One Concern.

John Howes's business connected far and wide, which cannot have been a hindrance to his older brother's cabinet making business, for supplies and deliveries, or his inn-keeping business for passing trade – the *Leicester Journal*, 10 April 1812:

CHEAP TRAVELLING,

FROM

Mr BRIGGS's

George Inn, and General Coach Office,

HAY MARKET LEICESTER.

THE Coventry and Birmingham Coaches every morning early, arrives at the Union Coach-Office, Coventry, in four hours, from Coventry to the Castle Inn, Birmingham, in three hours, gets in by half-past 11 o'clock in the morning, and returns by half-past 2 o'clock in the same afternoon, and gets into Leicester by 9 o'clock the same evening, *Also*

The Royal Leicester and Bristol Telegraph Coaches from the above Inn every morning as usual, through Coventry and Warwick, the nearest way to Oxford, Leamington, Cheltenham, Bath, and arrives at the Swan Inn, Mary-Port-street, Bristol, the same evening, where they meet Coaches to all parts of the West, returns from Bristol every evening at ten o'clock, and arrives at Leicester the same afternoon, where it meets Coaches to Nottingham, Derby, Manchester, Sheffield, Cambridge, and to all parts of Yorkshire.

The Proprietors of the above Coaches return their grateful thanks to their numerous friends for their kind partiality to the above Coaches, and hope for their future support.

Performed by the public's very obliged and humble Servants,

JOHN HOWES and Co. Leicester.

C. BESSELL and Co. Bristol.

²⁶ Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland, PR/T/SMP/795-950.

N. B. The Proprietors will not be accountable for any box, parcel, or any package whatever, above the value of Five Pounds, if lost or damaged, unless entered as such, and an Insurance paid according to the value on delivery at any of the offices in town and country.

The *Leicester Chronicle* of 21 April 1821 gives another glimpse:

Fly Van Waggons.
JOHN HOWES & Co.

RESPECTFULLY return thanks to their Friends and the Public, for the many favours conferred ; and take the opportunity of informing them, for the greater despatch of Goods, they have established FLY VAN WAGGONS, trusting, in proportion to their facility of conveyance, the encouragement their friends and the public in general,

To STAMFORD and CAMBRIDGE,

From JOHN HOWES & Co's Warehouse, on Tuesdays Thursday, and Saturday Mornings early ; through Uppingham, to HUNT'S Warehouse, Stamford, the same afternoon ; from whence Hunt's Waggons proceed to MARSH and Co's. Warehouse, Cambridge; which forward Goods to all parts of Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex :- Return from Stamford, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday mornings early, and arrive in Leicester, the same afternoon.

To BIRMINGHAM, BRISTOL and BATH.

Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings through Hinckley and Coventry, to HOWES and GABB'S Warehouse, Bordsley-street, Birmingham, where it arrives the same evening :- from whence their Waggons proceed daily through Worcester, Tewkesbury, Cheltenham and Gloucester, in SHURMER's Warehouse, Temple-street, Bristol in 36 hours ; in time to forward Goods by the respective Carriers to Bath, Exeter, Plymouth, and all parts of the West. Goods by these Waggons are forwarded from Birmingham immediately to all parts of South and North Wales.

PROPRIETORS,
JOHN HOWES, Leicester,
THOMAS REEVES, Uppingham,
WILLIAM SIMPSON, Stamford,
BENJAMIN GABB, Birmingham,
RICHARD SHURMER, Bristol.

Leicester, March 14th, 1821.

By 1812, Joshua Howes decided to move. The *Leicester Journal* of 13 March:

Leicester.

TO BE SOLD BY PRIVATE CONTRACT,

In a pleasant situation near to the Market-place, Hotel, and the Welford Road leading to London.

A Desirable freehold Estate, consisting of a brick house, joiners workshops, garden, and wood-yard adjoining the above premises, well calculated to carry on an extensive trade in the wood business. - Land tax redeemed

For further particulars enquire of Mr. JOSHUA HOWES, Granby-Street.

In the same newspaper on 10 June 1814, postponed from the previous week:

Postponed on account of the Illumination.

TO SOLD BY AUCTION, By Mr SMITH.

At the house of Mr. Joshua Howes, the Old Coal Yard, Leicester, on Wednesday June 15th, 1814, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

A Quantity of superior Oak, Ash, and Elm Boards, Planks, Squares and Scalings The above will sold in lots, and may viewed the day preceding the sale.

Joshua Howes still had an interest in victualling and, as will be seen, cabinet making. He was at the Castle Inn, Leicester in 1815.²⁷ Works were in hand, in both lines of business as shown by the Leicester Journal, 25 April 1817:

Prime seasoned Boards, Planks, &c.

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION

By DAVIS and SON,

On Tuesday May sixth, 1817,

On the premises of

Mr JOSHUA HOWES

Wellington Castle, London Road, Leicester.

A Prime assortment of seasoned Mahogany, Cedar, Oak, Ash, Elm, and Beech Boards and Planks, Wainscotes, oak boards, quantity of new Furniture, &c.

Further Particulars in next weeks paper.

Also

TO BE LET,

And entered upon at Midsummer next,

The above mentioned House, now in full

Business.

The above is an excellent situation, and will be found a desirable opportunity to anyone wishing to go into the public line of business.

[One concern.

The further particulars were:

... ALL the valuable stock of prime seasoned Timber, Tools, &c&c, of

Mr JOSHUA HOWES,

Who is totally declining the Timber Business,

On the premises at the

Wellington Castle, London Road, Leicester.

Consisting of prime seasoned oak wainscot, mahogany planks and boards, cedar planks and boards, veneering of all kinds, deal planks and boards and timber, beech planks and boards, pannel doors, excellent mangle with mahogany bed, quantity of cabinet maker's tools, several lots of new mahogany tables and chairs ...

He sold the Wellington Castle in early 1824; the *Leicester Chronicle* of 10 January advertised:

PRIMARY SITUATION AS AN INN.

TO BE SOLD BT AUCTION,

On THURSDAY, the 22^d instant, unless sooner disposed of by Private Contract, ALL that capital, very desirable, old established, and well-accustomed MARKET HOUSE and COACH INN, indubitably a first-rate situation for business, being central and openly situated, and by which all Coaches pass from London to Manchester; the whole commanding two extensive fronts, and is known the sign of the WELLINTON CASTLE (sic), now in full business, and in the occupation of Mr. Bell; comprising excellent cellarage,

²⁷ *Leicester Journal*, 6 October 1815, p. 1.

two large front parlours, kitchen, back kitchen, with soldiers' room over, bar, larder, spacious yard, well paved and walled in, brewhouse and malt-chamber over, gighouse, excellent roomy private boxes, and other stabling, for racers, hunters, teams, &c., hay and straw lofts, granary, and convenient piggeries, spring and soft water and lead pump, &c. The upper story comprises eight large sized sleeping rooms, and on the second story is a dining room, 42 feet by 16 feet

The whole has been erected but about seven years, is well finished, substantially built, and stands upon about 1400 yards of ground.

N.B. One half of the purchase money may remain on security.

To treat for the purchase apply to Mr. JOSH. HOWES, Evington Lodge, near Leicester, or Mr. JOHN HOWES, Humberstone-gate, Leicester.

John Howes the Younger died in April 1825. As befits the brother of a cabinet-maker, the furniture in his sale inventory repays attention. From the *Leicester Chronicle* 25 June 1825:

ELEGANT
HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE.

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION, BY W. DAVIS,

On TUESDAY, June 28th, and three following days,

ALL the truly modern HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, China, Glass, and other effects of
MR. JOHN HOWES, DECEASED,

On the premises, HUMBERSTONE-GATE, LEICESTER :

Comprising capital, lofty, four-post, tent, and other bedsteads, clothed with rich, white moreen and handsome, dimity furniture, six excellent feather beds, hair and straw mattresses, very large blankets and coverlets, mahogany double and single chest of drawers, mahogany night recess, bason stands, beautiful pier and swing glasses, dressing tables, modern painted and other chairs, floor and stair carpeting, handsome mahogany cellaret, mahogany dining tables (circular ends), mahogany chairs, mahogany Pembroke & card tables, several sets of high-polished fire irons, beautiful chimney glass, handsome mahogany bureau and book case (glass folding doors, very good sofas and covers, very fine-toned piano forte, with additional keys, in excellent preservation, mahogany screw music stool, pair of handsome tea urns, trays, glass, China, &c.; an excellent assortment of kitchen requisites, also a good assortment of brewing vessels, 50 gallon, 36 ditto, 18 ditto, and smaller barrels, all in high condition, 40 gallon furnace, 18 gallon copper, several dozens of glass bottles, good eight-day clock, &c., with about 50 lots of books.

Also, on Monday, July 4th, will be Sold by Auction, in the yard of the above premises, several six inch waggon and cart wheels, a quantity of tackle, several lots of wood and boards, bricks, slates, barrows, malt mill, dog kennels, iron troughs, old iron, with a variety of other articles.

Sale to begin each morning at ten o'clock.

Catalogues to be had at the place of sale, of the AUCTIONEER, and of Mr.
MARSHALL, Hotel, Leicester.

ALSO,

Some time in the month of July (if not sooner disposed of by private contract), All those valuable and extensive Premises, with two fronts of 77 feet each, in Millstone-lane and Marble-street, Leicester, the whole standing on 730 square yards, the property of the late Mr. John Howes, now in the occupation of Mr. William Smith, Wheelwright, who will shew the premises.

For further particulars, apply to Mr. WALE²⁸, Builder, Welford-road.

Thereafter Joshua Howes farmed at Evington where he is recorded in the Poll Books of 1826, 1832 and 1835.²⁹ His death notice (see below) refers to 'Evington Lodge'; the *Leicester Chronicle* of 11 October 1817 advertised:

EVINGTON LODGE,
NEAR SPINNEY HILLS, WITHIN ONE MILE FROM LEICESTER
TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION, By DAVIS and SON,

On Wednesday next, October 15, 1817, on the premises of Mr. THOMAS GILBERT, Evington Lodge, near Leicester, (who is leaving that Farm,) CONSISTING of 55 very useful breeding Ewes, 119 wether and ewe lambs, 10 excellent incalved cows, 2 ditto heifers, capital 2 year old short horned bull, 2 year old filley, useful mare, 4 store pigs, sow and eight pigs, and several lots of farming utensils.

Sale to begin in the morning at ten o'clock.

The above beast and sheep are particularly useful, and will be found worthy attention.

The timing would fit not long after Howes's sales of the joiner's workshop, wood-yard and the wood pile. Scrutiny of the local papers shows a number of people, particularly farmers, living at 'Evington Lodge' in the 1830s and 1840s; it may have been the focal house of a number of farms near Evington itself. The 1817 advertisement is the only reference before the *Leicester Chronicle* of 18 April 1829 records the death 'On Sunday last, Mrs. Howes, of Evington Lodge, in the 76th year of her age.'

Joshua Howes makes two appearances in the Leicester newspapers in connection with criminal trials: those of one man accused of poaching (where is stated that the land Howes farmed was owned by G. A. Legh Keck) and another accused of the theft of some Muscovy ducks.³⁰

His efforts to quit the 'Timber business' in 1817 do not appear to have been wholly successful. Perhaps, however, the *Leicester Chronicle* of 16/23 September 1837 really was Joshua Howes's last cabinet-making hurrah because he offered his work bench for sale:

To Cabinet Makers, Carpenters, & Others.
TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,
BY B. PAYNE,

On Monday the 25th day of September 1837, upon the Premises of Mr. Howes,
Evington Lodge, near Leicester,

A Large quantity of seasoned WOOD consisting of about 1,000 feet of Spanish and Honduras mahogany, in boards and planks, a quantity of beautiful rosewood and mahogany veneers, black ebony, king wood, box, zebra plank, Canary plank and boards³¹, 500 feet of wainscot oak boards, Yew tree, with bows, suitable for Windsor chairs, Palmara wood³²,

²⁸ James Wale was married to Joshua Howes's elder daughter Charlotte (and the late John Howes's niece).

²⁹ *Leicester Poll Books*, 1826, p. 42 as 'Howe, Josh.', elsewhere in another edition of the 1826 Poll Book 'Howes, Joshua, Evington Lodge, farmer', p. 69; 1832, p. 52; and 1835, p. 53.

³⁰ The *Preston Guardian*, obituary 8 September 1860: Lieutenant Colonel George Anthony Legh Keck (1774–1860), Member of Parliament for the County of Leicester, 1797–1818 and 1820–1831; *Leicester Chronicle*, 31 January 1835, p. 3; and *Leicestershire Mercury* 22 October 1836, p. 2.

³¹ For Canary wood, see Bowett (2012), pp. 52–4.

³² Probably Palmyra wood; see Bowett (2012), p. 180.

sycamore boards, a few lots of wheelwrights wood, oak butts, deal boards and planks, elm planks, capital grinding stone and frame, work bench complete, old iron, &c.

Sale to commence at ten o'clock.

An intriguing inventory for a man who had been apprenticed more than sixty four years previously — a wide range of cabinet woods from far-flung countries and the wherewithal to make a few more Windsor chairs.

He did not quite manage to divest himself of all his wood in 1837. A few stacks and piles in forgotten corners escaped disposal. The *Leicester Journal* of 19 March 1841 marked Joshua Howes's final sale:

To Farmers, Cabinet Makers, and others. — *Evington-lane, near Leicester.*

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,

BY B. PAYNE and SON.

ON Monday the 29th day of March, 1841, the whole of FARMING STOCK, Implements in Husbandry, Household Furniture, Brewing Vessels, Dairy Utensils, Stock of prime well-seasoned Mahogany, Oak, Ash, Beech, Elm, and Deal, in pieces, planks, butts, slabs, &c. and many other effects, of Mr. HOWES, on the premises, Evington lane, near Leicester, particulars of which will given next week.

Catalogues to be had at the Auctioneers Offices, Market-street, and Place of Sale, five days previous.

The old man was robbed again: the *Leicester Chronicle* of 17 December 1842 reported how

On Wednesday night, the house in Evington-lane, in the occupation of Mr. Howes, was broken into by some thieves, who succeeded in decamping with six cheeses, two copper kettles, and a quantity of provisions. They effected their entrance by taking out the dairy window, at the back of the house.

The *Leicester Journal* of 5 December 1845 records:

Valuable Ash and Elm Timber, near Leicester.

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,

By B. PAYNE,

On Tuesday, the 16th day of December, 1845,

TWO Hundred and Fifty valuable Ash and Elm TIMBER TREES, now cut down and lying in the lordships of Evington and Stoughton, near Leicester. The Company are requested to meet at Mr. HOWES' Cottage, Evington Lane, at 11 o'clock in the morning, to proceed to sale.

Joshua Howes's cottage was plainly easy enough to find or sufficiently well-known that it was a landmark that needed no elaboration. One wonders whether he was able to resist buying a few trees for old times' sake.

Joshua and Mary Howes's second daughter Sarah (1791–1876) was baptised on 28 January 1791 at St Mary's de Castro, Leicester.³³ She married another cabinet-maker, William Read, on 2 August 1818 in St Margaret's, Leicester.³⁴ In the Leicester Poll

³³ Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland, 8D59/17.

³⁴ Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland, 24D65/D9.

Books of 1826, 1832 and 1835, William Read, cabinet maker, is recorded at Silver Street, and then twice at Swine's Market.³⁵ In early 1838 misfortune struck:

N.B. - See the Notice at the end of their Advertisements.

THE COURT FOR RELIEF OF INSOLVENT DEBTORS

The Matters of the Petition and Schedule of the Prisoners hereinafter named (the name having been filed in the Court) are appointed to be heard as follows at the Court house at Leicester in the County of Leicester on the 9th day of April 1838, at the hour of ten in the forenoon precisely. ...

WILLIAM READ, formerly of Leicester, in the county of Leicester, Journeyman cabinet maker, afterwards of the same place cabinet maker. ...

Shearman and Freeman, 21 Bartlet's Buildings, Holborn, for BOND, Solicitor, Leicester. ...

TAKE NOTICE

1. If any Creditor intends to oppose a Prisoner's Discharge, Notice of such Intention must be given to the said Prisoner in Writing, three Clear Days before the Day of Hearing, Exclusive of Sunday, and Exclusive both of the Day of giving such Notice and of the said Day of Hearing.

2. But in the case of Prisoner, whom his Creditors have removed by an Order of the Court, from a Gaol in or near London, for Hearing in the Country, such Notice of Opposition will be sufficient if given One Clear Day before the Day of Hearing.

3. The Petition and Schedule will be produced by the proper Officer for Inspection and Examination at the Office of the Court in London, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, between the Hours of Ten and Four : and Copies of the Petition and Schedule, or such Part thereof as shall be required, will be provided the Proper Officer according to the Act 7 Geo. 4, c. 57, sec.76. NB. Entrance to the Office, in Portugal Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

4. The Duplicate of the Petition and Schedule, and all Books, Papers filed therewith, will be produced for Inspection and Examination by the Clerk of the Peace, Town Clerk, or other Person, with whom the same shall have been directed to be lodged for such purpose, at the Office of such Clerk of the Peace or other person, and copies of the Petition and Schedule, or such part thereof as shall be required, will be there provided according to the Act 7 Geo. 4, c. 57, sec. 77, as the case may be.³⁶

Perhaps the insolvency led them to make a new start near Sarah's brother George Howes, a fellow cabinet maker, as by 1841 they were living in Birmingham. By 1847, however, the Read family had moved back to Morledge Street, Leicester.³⁷ At that time Joshua Howes, gentleman, was living at Evington Lane,³⁸ but by 1851 he was living with them. Quite remarkably, given that he was at least 95, in 1853 Joshua Howes is still recorded at the Blue Boar Inn, Southgate St.³⁹

In 1849 he is mentioned in a piece about a survey of an ancient footpath near Evington:

³⁵ *Leicester Poll Books*, 1826, p. 34; 1832, p. 35; and 1835, p. 37.

³⁶ *Leicester Herald*, 17 March 1838.

³⁷ *Leicester Poll Book*, 1847, p. 27.

³⁸ *Leicester Poll Book*, 1847, p. 25.

³⁹ Melville (1853), p. 97. This entry is odd and quite possibly erroneous, not least because 'Howes, John, carrier, Southgate st.' also appears on the line above 28 years after his death.

... Mr Joshua Howes, formerly of Evington, a hale old gentleman of more than 90, who had been equally well acquainted with the walk for more than 80 years...⁴⁰

From the *Leicester Chronicle*, 17 December 1853:

[Deaths] On the 13th inst. at the residence of Mr Read, Morledge-street, in his 102nd year, Mr Joshua Howes, late of the Wellington Castle, in this town.

and the *Leicester Journal* of 16 December 1853:

DEATH OF "THE OLDEST INHABITANT."—In our obituary of this week is recorded the death of Mr. Joshua Howes in his 102nd year, the oldest inhabitant of this town. The deceased it will be remembered by some of our older readers was formerly landlord of the Blue Boar and Wellington Castle Inns, but more recently resided at Evington Lodge near this town. He was highly respected by a large circle of friends.

He may have fibbed about his age: if he was in his 102nd year he would have been born more than four years before his parents' marriage and more than five years before his baptism: it is more likely that he was nearly 96 when he died. His death certificate declares that he was 101 and that the cause of death was 'Paralysis 9 days certified'.⁴¹

The above chronology and facts, and the absence of other candidates in the East Midlands or elsewhere, show that Joshua Howes was the master of a workshop which can be shown to have existed between c. 1780 and c. 1812, with a later incarnation at Evington Lodge until 1837. It is relatively rare to show that a maker of Windsor chairs was primarily described as a cabinet maker. The likelihood is that the Windsor chairs of the style, construction and period shown (Figures 2 to 7), one stamped 'HOWES', were made before the move to Evington.

William Sergeant suggested that some aspects of the stamped HOWES chair bore a close resemblance to an unstamped chair published by the author in this Journal last year. There a comparison was made to a chair known to be by John Amos of Grantham.⁴² A closer link may perhaps be made to the Howes chair (Figure 9). The shape of the back bows, the shaping and joints of the arm bows and arm stands and the seat shapes are comparable but not identical. The similarity of the arm bows, sticks, seat profiles, leg turnings and crinoline stretchers and spurs is clear (Figure 10). The likeness of construction and design when the chairs are viewed from underneath is also close (Figure 11). The chairs may not be from the same workshop but whoever made them was trained in similar regional techniques.

WILLIAM ROWE REVISITED

It will be remembered that by 1990 Dr B. D. Cotton had located only one example of a chair stamped by an identifiable Leicestershire maker: that of William Rowe. William Sergeant has been studying the features which distinguish chairs from different Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire workshops for many years. He managed in a magnificent feat of persistence to track down the only known Rowe chair to its owner in California, whose family have kindly sent the pictures which appear here (Figures 12 to 17). They show a large comb back Windsor armchair. The

⁴⁰ *Leicestershire Mercury*, 29 September 1849, p. 2.

⁴¹ <https://www.howesfamilies.com/showmedia.php?mediaID=138&medialinkID=7622>.

⁴² Parker (2020), pp. 126–29.

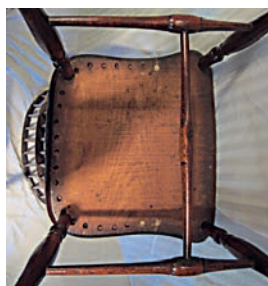


9 (above left) Left: Low armchair, tapered back bow. Yew and elm. Eight pierced splats with roundels, three upper and five lower, morticed into the arm bow. Crook arm stands, wedged through the bell-shaped chamfered seat. Four shallow ring and concave leg turnings with a single lower ring. Crinoline stretcher with two spurs — front. Right: 'HOWES' chair. © J. H. J. Parker

10 (above right) Same two chairs — detail below arm bow, of seat and leg turnings. © J. H. J. Parker



11 (left) Same two chairs — detail underneath. © J. H. J. Parker



12 (left) Comb back Windsor armchair. Ash and fruitwood with elm seat. Stamped 'W. ROWE' © *Del Francis*

13 (centre) Same chair from underneath showing barrel turnings on the stretchers and sticks mortised through the seat. © *Del Francis*

14 (right) Same chair – detail of barrel turnings on the stretchers. © *Del Francis*

chair is made from ash and fruitwood with an elm seat on the side edge of which is stamped 'W. ROWE' twice, once the right way up, the other upside down.

It is clear that the maker was a chairmaker of skill: the rare combination of decoratively-turned stiles (which both extend in a single piece of wood through the arm bow all the way to the seat), a dozen long sticks, eight short stick and crook underarm stands, all fixed into a rare heavily-curved comb rail and arm bow, sit elegantly over the bell-shaped seat (Figure 12).⁴³ The twenty sticks and two arm stands are all through-mortised and wedged from underneath the seat (Figure 13). This is a technique that tends to point to an earlier rather than a later date, probably before 1830. Two intriguing features are unusual: double lower ring leg turnings and the barrel turnings on both side stretchers and the cross stretcher (Figures 14 and 15). As will be seen, it appears possible that barrel turnings may be a feature of chairs that may be connected to Leicestershire. The stamp (Figure 16) is also unusual: most workshop stamps use large letters of consistent height either on the upper seat surface or on a side edge. This type of lettering and stamp is more commonly seen on tools to denote ownership. The last rarity is that each first short stick under the arm bow is through-morticed and very neatly wedged from above (Figure 17). This detail is almost unknown in East Midlands Windsor chairs. The chair remains unique: nothing of comparable design of its quality has been found.

William Rowe remains slightly elusive. He is listed as 'turner' in Hallaton in 1828.⁴⁴ In 1835, there is a John Rowe, 'chair turner'.⁴⁵ In 1841 William Rowe again, 'chair maker'.⁴⁶ By 1846 the only chair maker in Hallaton is William Exton.⁴⁷ There are two

⁴³ The author is grateful to William Sergeant for drawing his attention to another comb back Windsor armchair which has decoratively-turned stiles which extend in a single piece of wood all the way to the seat: this chair bears the stamp of Marsh of Sleaford. These two chairs are the only East Midlands comb backs with this rare feature that William Sergeant and the author have recorded.

⁴⁴ Pigot & Co. (1828), p. 478.

⁴⁵ Pigot & Co. (1835), p. 117.

⁴⁶ Pigot & Co. (1841), p. 9.

⁴⁷ White (1846), p. 505.



15 (top left) Same chair — close up of barrel turning. © *Del Francis*

16 (top right) Detail of 'W ROWE' stamp. © *Del Francis*

17 (bottom) Detail of same chair — first stick below arm bow behind arm stand through-mortised and wedged from above. © *Del Francis*

Williams Rowe in the 1841 Poll Book for the Hundred of Gartree which includes Hallaton. Respondents to the enumerators for the 1841 census were requested to round their ages down to the nearest multiple of five: a person's real age may be under-recorded by as many as four years. There are three Williams Rowe in the 1841 census in Hallaton: one a shoemaker aged 55 (implying a birth year of 1786, but who actually lived 1782–1857, confirmed by the 1851 census and parish register)⁴⁸, one a grazier aged 80 (implying a birth year of 1761, but actually 1759 or 1760–1842, from the parish register and his will)⁴⁹ and one, aged 65, of independent means (implying a birth year between 1772 and 1776). A baptism of 5 April 1772 is of William, 'son of the late William and Ann his wife'. John Rowe, baptised 29 December 1769, is also 'son of William and Ann'.⁵⁰ John Rowe is buried 7 October 1840, aged 70. William Rowe is buried 17 August 1845, aged 76 (implying birth in 1769).⁵¹ Taken as a whole, given the imprecision which eighteenth century parish registers sometimes show, the likelihood must be that the Rowe chairmakers and turners of Hallaton were these two brothers, John and William. One should note that they would have been of an age to have completed their apprenticeships by between c. 1790 and c. 1793 and to have been in a position to trade thereafter.

OTHER EAST MIDLANDS CONUNDRUMS — ARE THEY FROM LEICESTERSHIRE?

The author and fellow Regional Furniture Society members William Sergeant and John Boden have been aware for some years of a number of well-made Windsor chairs

⁴⁸ Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland, baptism: DE1556/2, 2 January 1782, son of John and Elizabeth; burial: DE1556/6 12 March 1857, aged 75.

⁴⁹ Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland, baptism: DE1556/2, 14 June 1759, son of Thomas and Mary or 25 July 1760, son of Arthur and Jane; burial: DE1556/6 13 March 1842, aged 83; will: Probated Wills, 1842 K-Z.

⁵⁰ Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland, baptisms: DE1556/2, each 'son of William and Ann'.

⁵¹ Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland, burials: DE1556/6.



18 Windsor
armchair with
quatrefoil-fretted
splat, with barrel
turnings on the
stretchers.

© W. R. Sergeant

clearly constructed using East Midlands techniques but which do not quite fit either with known Lincolnshire or Nottinghamshire makers. What follows is an attempt to set out the features of these chairs in the hope that it may one day prove possible to be more definite about their region of origin. The best guess, as matters stand, is that these chairs come from Leicestershire, based partly on common design and constructional elements and to some degree on the areas where the chairs have been offered for sale.



19 Pair of Windsor armchairs with quatrefoil-fretted splats, with barrel turnings on the stretchers. © *Wilkinson's Auctioneers*

GROUP I — BOW BACK ARMCHAIRS WITH QUATREFOIL SPLATS

An unusual armchair of East Midlands construction (tapered terminals to the arm bow at its mortice into the back bow, bell shaped seat with saddle and regionally characteristic leg turnings) had no provenance and was acquired from a dealer in Robin Hood's Bay in Yorkshire (Figure 18). Its overall style dates the chair to the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The one-piece quatrefoil splat, threaded through a letterbox mortice joint is uncommon. The arm bow has an incised scribe line but the bell-shaped seat does not. What distinguishes it further, is the barrel turnings on all the three components of the H-form stretchers and the double lower ring turnings on all four legs. These have, of course, been observed on the stamped W Rowe chair above.

A pair of similar armchairs from another private collection were sold at Wilkinson's in 2012 (Figure 19). They bear a great deal of resemblance both to each other and to the armchair acquired in Yorkshire (Figure 18). The right-hand armchair from those sold as a pair is illustrated here, on the left, for comparison with the latter, on the right

20 Right-hand Windsor armchair from Figure 18 on the left, that from Figure 17 on the right. © W. R. Sergeant



21 Detail of right-hand Windsor armchair from Figure 18 — first stick below arm bow behind arm stand through-mortised and wedged from above. © J. M. Boden



(Figure 20). They could very easily come from the same workshop: almost all design and construction features are identical (note the barrel turnings on the stretchers and the double lower ring leg turnings again) apart from one: the Wilkinson's chair shows a different method of securing the back bow to the arm bow. This joint is made by reducing the square section of the back hoop to a smaller square section tenon, which leaves a shoulder to sit on top of the arm bow and is very commonly found in Thames Valley chairs. Perhaps the maker and the workshop were at the junction between two developing regional traditions: Dr B. D. Cotton notes two chairs from a Northamptonshire maker, stamped 'J·MARCH GEDDINGTON' which combine features from both North East Midlands and Thames Valley traditions, so the phenomenon is not without precedent.⁵² The provenance of the chairs in Figure 19? A house in Loughborough, Leicestershire. All three chairs in this group have elm seats; the rest, apart from rear legs of ash, is made of yew: they have an incised scribe line round the back bow but not round the seat. There is one final detail in the two Wilkinson's chairs that is significant. The top of the left side of the arm bow of the right hand chair in Figure 19 has the very same highly unusual first short stick under the arm bow, through-mortised and very neatly wedged from above (Figure 21), as with the W. Rowe chair (compare Figure 17). That technique, together with the barrel turnings, must make it very likely that these chairs were made in the same workshop.

⁵² Cotton (1990), pp. 123-4, Figs NE 57, NE 58, NE 59 and NE 60.



22 Windsor armchair with wheat sheaf splat, barrel turnings on the stretchers and egg and reel turnings on the legs. © W. R. Sergeant

23 Same chair – detail of barrel turnings and egg and reel leg turnings. © W. R. Sergeant

A fourth chair in this group, with no provenance, was sold in Truro in October 2021. It is identical to the Wilkinson's chairs in all respects, except that apart from the elm seat, the rest is of ash and fruitwood and there is no scribe line round the back bow.

One more armchair must be considered for its possibly surprising links to this group (Figures 22 and 23). This is a very fine medium height bow back Windsor armchair with stylised wheat sheaf splat (rebated into the arm bow), six long sticks and six short sticks either side of the splat, crook underarm stands, bell-shaped seat, all legs with top egg and lower egg with long reel turnings, together with H-form stretcher with barrel turnings each with a central scribe line on both side stretchers and the cross stretcher. At the Regional Furniture Society Chair Study Day in September 2014 this chair, from a private collection (whose owner could obtain no provenance when he bought the chair), ended up next to one of the chairs from Wilkinson's. It became immediately apparent to the owners of the two chairs that the stretchers were almost identical. One, who is a retired engineer, told the author 'if we'd had some Vernier calipers, the measurements would have been identical. Whoever turned those two sets of stretchers was using the same turning template. I'm quite sure they were made in the same workshop.'

Most Windsor chair collectors, if asked to hazard a guess at the region of origin of the armchair in Figure 22, would choose East Anglia, based on a chair largely similar, at least from the seat upwards, illustrated by Dr B. D. Cotton.⁵³ The author has collated records of fifteen chairs with this splat type, fourteen of medium back height and one high. All have six long sticks and six short sticks. Only two other armchairs, one from the sold archive of a Kent dealer and the other in an East Anglian auction in October 2021, have the same eggs and long reel turnings and barrel stretchers as Figure 22. Six have plain H-form stretchers, seven have a dart cross stretcher. Of the remaining thirteen, four were either sold or found in East Anglia, one in Warwickshire, two in Oxfordshire and the rest have no obvious geographical connection. Any further information on provenance or region for this type of chair would be very welcome.

⁵³ Cotton (1990), p. 256, Figure EA 165.



24 Medium height bow back stick back Windsor armchair, with barrel turnings on the stretchers. © *W. R. Sergeant*

25 Medium height bow back stick back Windsor armchair, with barrel turnings on the stretchers. © *Planet Antiques*

26 Same chair — detail of the seat, leg turnings and barrel turnings on the stretchers. © *Planet Antiques*

27 Medium height bow back stick back Windsor armchair, with barrel turnings on the side stretchers and replacement cross stretcher. © *Gildings Auctioneers*

GROUP 2 — BOW BACK STICK BACK ARMCHAIRS

A bow back chair stick back from a private collection is illustrated (Figure 24). Below the armbow (fixed by the method commoner in the Thames Valley), which also has a scribe line incised, are nine long sticks, eight short sticks, and crook arm stands. The bell shaped seat (without incised scribe line), legs turnings with double lower ring and H-form stretchers with barrel turnings could be exchanged for those on any of the chairs in Group 1 (Figures 18 to 20). At its purchase the owner was told that it came



28 Medium height bow back stick back Windsor armchair, with barrel turnings on the stretchers.© *Lacy, Scott and Knight*

from a solicitor's office in Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. An armchair with the same features was sold at a Nottingham auction house in February 2021 (Figures 25 and 26). Another chair in this group, but with plain back legs and a replacement cross stretcher, was sold at Gildings in Market Harborough, Leicestershire, in September 2017 (Figure 27). An armchair with the same features as the first two in this group (Figures 24 and 25) was sold at Lacy Scott Knight in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk in June 2018 (Figure 28).



29 Medium height bow back Windsor armchair with upper star splat and multiple ring leg turnings. © J. H. J. Parker



30 Same chair —detail of multiple ring leg turnings. © J. H. J. Parker

GROUP 3 — ARMCHAIRS WITH A STAR WHEEL SPLAT

The final group of five East Midlands mysteries share several features in common: all have a wheel splat with a star at its centre, usually with a black middle to the star, possibly stained to look like ebony, under an arm bow which has tapered ends and a scribe line. All five are bow back armchairs with eight long sticks: four have eight short sticks and crook arm stands under the arm bow while the other has six short sticks and crook arm stands. All five have bell-shaped seats with incised scribe line. Two have crinoline stretchers with spurs, three have H-form stretchers. They most likely date from the first quarter of the nineteenth century. None is likely to be much later than c. 1830.

A chair from the author's collection which came from a dealer in Newark is illustrated (Figures 29 and 30). It has elaborate front leg turnings with five rings above a concave turning and two pairs of rings on the lower leg, one pair of thin and the other of asymmetric thicknesses. Similar multiple-ring, but not identical, leg turnings have been recorded in chairs made by makers known to have worked in Grantham



31 Medium height bow back Windsor armchair with upper star splat and multiple ring leg turnings.
© *Sheffield Auction Rooms*

and Sleaford.⁵⁴ An armchair (Figure 31) was sold at Sheffield Auction Rooms in October 2020. Very similar to the preceding chair (Figure 29) above the seat, the front leg turnings again feature multiple rings but in a different configuration. The lower legs have a thin double ring. The chair has plain back legs and an H-form stretcher with pronounced central graduated swellings in the turning. An armchair was sold at Gildings Market Harborough, Leicestershire in January 2019 (Figure 32). Again very similar above the seat, the chair has plain back legs and an H-form stretcher. The armchairs offered by Medway Antiques in May 2021 (Figure 33) and sold at Sheffield Auction Rooms in October 2020 (Figure 34) are very alike all respects. The author would be very keen to hear from anyone who can shed further light on this group.

⁵⁴ See e.g. Cotton (1990), p. 110, Plate 12 and p. 116, Figure NE 20 (both Amos), p. 120, Figure NE 35 (Brand) and NE 38 (Marsh).



32 Medium height bow back Windsor armchair with upper star splat. © *Gildings Auctioneers*

33 Medium height bow back Windsor armchair with upper star splat. © *Medway Antiques*

34 Medium height bow back Windsor armchair with upper star splat. © *Wotton Auction Rooms*



CONCLUSION

There is an increasing body of evidence both stylistically and in terms of provenance and location of sale, where known, which suggests that it may be possible to narrow

down the region of origin of these groups of chairs to Leicestershire. The author hopes that readers will let him know if they see other chairs which may repay further study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All transcriptions from any source are the author's own. He would like to thank John Boden, Dr B. D. Cotton, Tim Garland, Stephen Jackson and William Sergeant for their observations and guidance on this article as it developed. Thanks for photographic and copyright permissions are due to: John Boden, Del Francis, Gildings Auctioneers, John Hall, Robert Hirschhorn, Medway Antiques, Planet Antiques, Sheffield Auction Rooms, David Swanson, William Sergeant, Wilkinson's Auctioneers and Wotton Auction Rooms.

ERRATUM

In the author's article in *Regional Furniture* XXXIV (2020) at p. 56, footnote 5 concerning the Chelsea Bun House was omitted. It should have read:

⁵ British Museum, 1880,1113.2421. For accounts of the interior and the sale of the extraordinary contents on 18 April 1839, see British Museum 1880,1113.2422.1-3. Limburd (1839), pp. 209-10 and 286-7: Lot 30 'Ten curious old wood-seat chairs. Sold for £3 13s. 6d.' and Lot 31 'A railed-back elbow garden-chair, shewn in our engraving of the interior of the Bun-House. Sold for £1 17s.'

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