

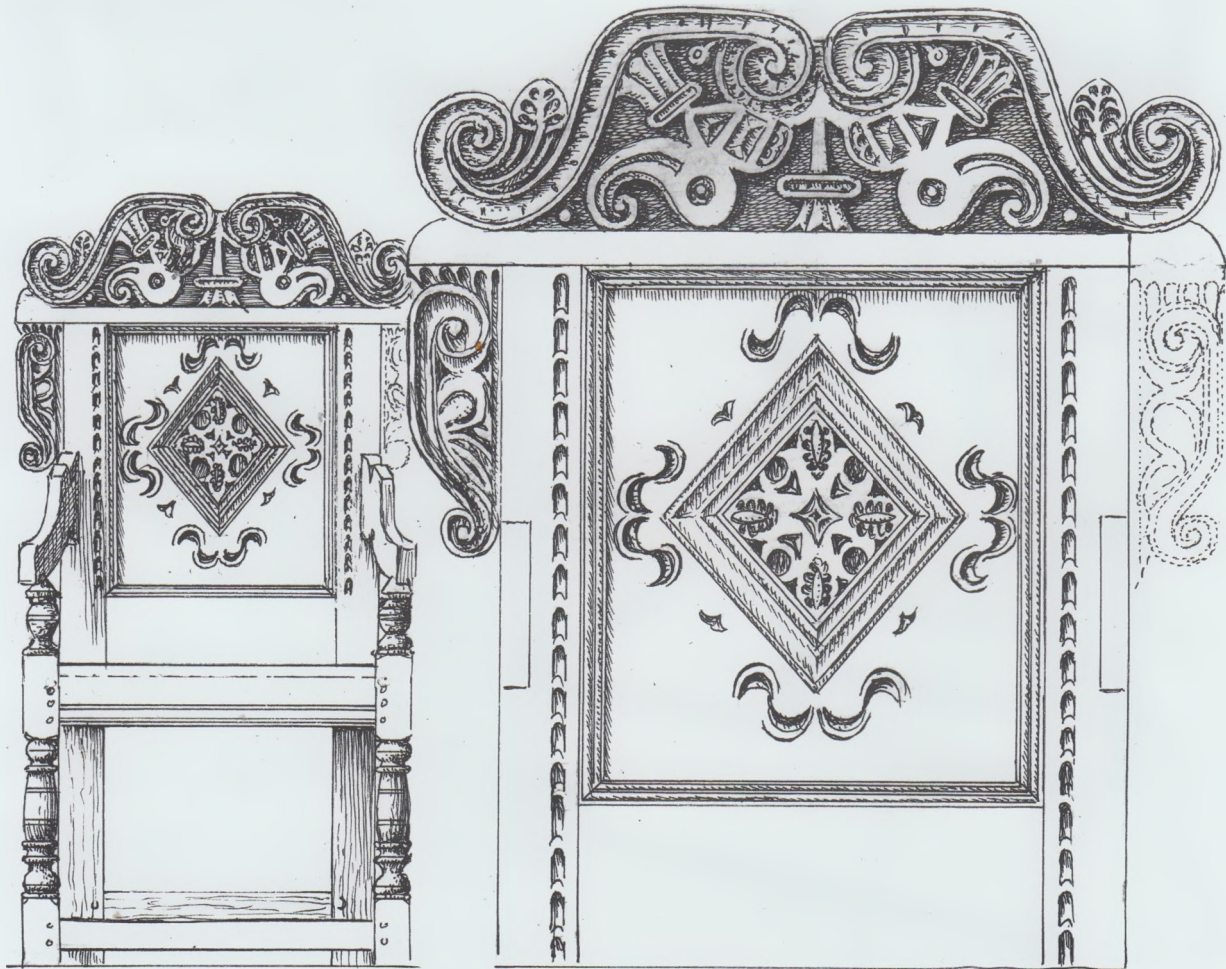
# A provenanced Halifax chair

The publication of my article on West Yorkshire furniture in vol. XXXIII of *Regional Furniture* has brought to light a rare example having a sound provenance to Halifax. Kept in a nearby chapel, it has always been known as 'Dan Taylor's Chair'. Dan was born on 21 December 1738, at Sourmilk Hall, Northowram, son of Azor Taylor, a miner, and his

second wife Mary Willey of Fold in the same township. Already down the mines by his sixth birthday, and without any formal education, he moved into lodgings in Halifax in the early 1750s, where he and his brother John became Methodists. In 1763 he joined the Baptists, being ordained in that year and establishing a chapel at Birchcliffe, on the hillside above Hebden Bridge, remaining there until returning to serve as a pastor in Halifax in 1783. Three years later he removed to London, ministering at the Baptist Chapel in Church Lane, Whitechapel, up to his death on 26 November 1816. His influence was country-wide, his role as founder of the New Baptist Connexion demanding the delivery of 20,000 sermons during journeys totalling 25,000 miles, and the writing of over fifty books and pamphlets.

It is not known when he obtained this chair. It is unlikely to have been a family heirloom from Northowram, but was most probably acquired when setting up his home after marrying Elizabeth Saltonstall at Heptonstall, near Hebden Bridge in 1764, but it must have been before he left for London, when it may have been left behind with his brother John.

The chair is clearly a West Yorkshire example of the later seventeenth century, its crest rail, for example, being similar to those remaining in St John's, Leeds, and Ripon Cathedral, but the ears, back panel, turning and gouged decoration on the posts are clearly quite different from anything made in Leeds, and must be by a Halifax



Chair, Halifax, West Yorkshire, c. 1660–80. *Peter Brears*

joiner. Information on any similar examples would be most welcome.

Main source: *Dictionary of National Biography*, LIII (Oxford 2004), p. 875.

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