

# Robert Garnett and Sons, Lancashire Cabinet Makers 1824-1915

John and Rosy Galls's piece on the engraving of Marshall George Strapps beside his throne chair, in the Spring 2021 *Newsletter*, No. 74, p. 17, reminded me of an 'Ecumenical Conference Chair' by Robert Garnett

and Sons, cabinet makers and upholsterers of Warrington, illustrated in Garnetts' plush brochure, published in about 1900.

Garnetts contributed a chair for the 1891 Wesleyan Centenary Celebration in Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London, for the use of the President for conference sittings, the Garnetts being devoted Wesleyans themselves. The chair illustrated here is clearly marked 1891 and may have been the very one. However, I have a sketch of another grand chair which also claims to have been made for that same conference. Which one was used I cannot say. In those days, a new President's chair was commissioned for each annual conference. This practice has long ceased.

The second illustration is of 'The Headmaster's Chair', which is in the Leys School in Cambridge. It too was made by Garnetts and commemorated the school's first headmaster, William Fiddian Moulton, who, incidentally, had been president of the Wesleyan

Conference in 1890 and most likely commissioned the chair.

Robert Garnett and Sons was founded in Penketh, Lancashire, in 1824, by my great-great-grandfather, Robert Garnett, and flourished until the First World War when it closed, partly due to the ill health of my grandfather who was by then the proprietor of the firm, but mostly, I guess, because the men had gone off to war and customers were few. A branch of the firm in Liverpool was sold to Waring and Gillow.

I have extensive records of the Garnett family but few of the firm or its clients. If any RFS members can provide any information I would be hugely grateful. Also, I would be interested to know about another firm of cabinet makers, Garnett and Son of Chester, which was founded by William Garnett, Robert Garnett's second son, who left the family firm to set up on his own.

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'The Headmaster's Chair', in the Leys School in Cambridge.  
*Photo Phillipa Graham.*



ŒCUMENICAL CONFERENCE CHAIR.

'Ecumenical Conference Chair' 1891, from the brochure of Robert Garnett and Sons, Warrington c. 1900.