

Middleton Chair

This chair, found at auction near Evesham, has been cut down at the top and lost its comb back. The pad feet are worn. It is, however, recognisably one of a group of chairs first discussed in William Sergeant's article in *Regional Furniture*, XXXII, 2018, pp. 93–102, 'Joseph Newton, Windsor Chair Maker of Fenton, Lincolnshire'. These chairs are further discussed in my RFS YouTube channel lectures 'Eighteenth-Century Windsor Chairs — Early Types and New Discoveries in Lincolnshire' at 34:41 onwards and 'Eighteenth-Century Windsor Chairs — Research, Repair and Authentic Replication' at 30:51 onwards. The predominant identificatory feature of these chairs is the seat saddle sculpted both above and, most unusually, below. The underside has the stencil 'ST PAUL'S' in black ink. On the summer conference in 2021 we saw a pair of chairs in the Wren Library at Lincoln Cathedral (*Newsletter* 75, p. 25–6). All the features of the chair found near Evesham are the same as those of the Wren Library chairs and it is likely that the missing comb back and crest rail will have been identical. RFS members who attended the Bridgwater Conference in 2022 may have seen the chair found near Evesham which I showed at the Furniture Surgery on Sunday morning (see p. 45 below). The mystery is to what organisation — cathedral, church, school, charity — does the 'ST PAUL'S' relate? Can any readers help, please?

Julian Parker

Top Chair found at Middleton auction house near Evesham, which is missing its comb back.

Photo Julian Parker

Middle The distinctive seat saddle, carved both above and below. *Photo Julian Parker*

Bottom View showing the St Paul's stamp on the underside of the seat. *Photo Julian Parker*

