

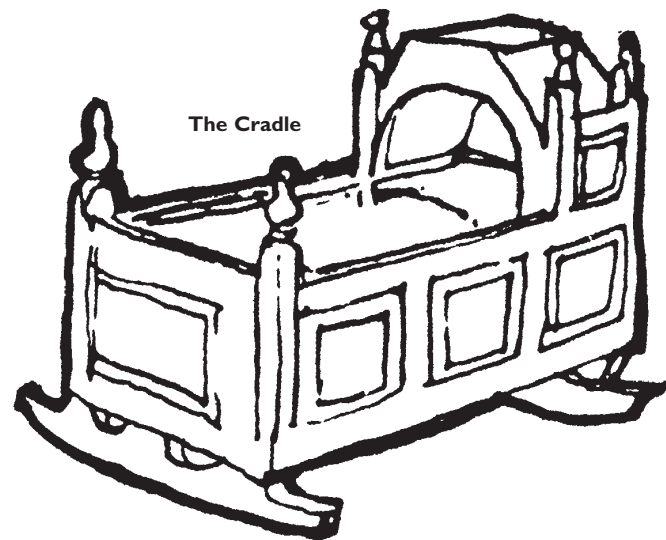
TO SLEEP IN



The Cradle: Babies slept in wooden cradles. This one has a hood to prevent draughts and is on rockers.

The half-headed bed had a half-size headboard but no testerne. The short posts at the foot of the bed-frame—again roped together—have slots for blanket sticks which were designed to prevent blankets falling off in the night. Stitching a loop to the corner of the blankets and sliding them over two sticks at each end of the bed ensured that the blankets remained in place!

Sacks filled with straw—or just straw
Servants sleeping in the attics might have to make do with straw for their bed, or, if lucky, sacks stuffed with straw!



The tester bed was the most expensive type of bed at the Hall, (commonly called a four poster bed!). The solid wooden **testerne** roof gives the bed its name. The sides, roof, headboard and posted end were pegged together and held secure by a rope threaded across and lengthways through the wooden side pieces. The rope was tightened periodically to provide a taut base for the mattress—then known as the ‘bed’. Once assembled, the bed was enclosed with curtains to keep out any draughts and to provide an element of privacy.

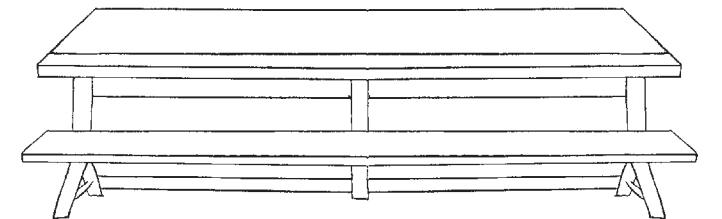
Truckle beds were very common, cheap and useful. They were made from four pieces of wood set on short legs with wheels so that the bed could be rolled away and stored under another bed when not in use. They were held together by a rope in the same way as the tester bed. If the family was wealthy enough, a rush mat was placed between the rope base and the mattress.

FURNITURE AT

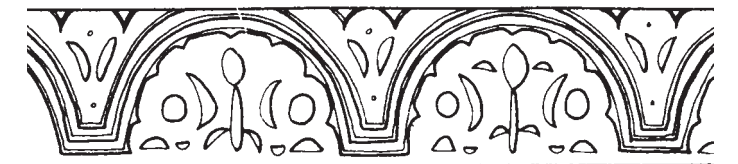
Blakesley Hall

TO PUT THINGS ON

The long table in the great hall is carved on one side. It was used by the household for meals and by Richard Smalbroke to sit at to meet and to collect rents from his tenants. On Feast Days everyone in the Hall would be able to eat together.

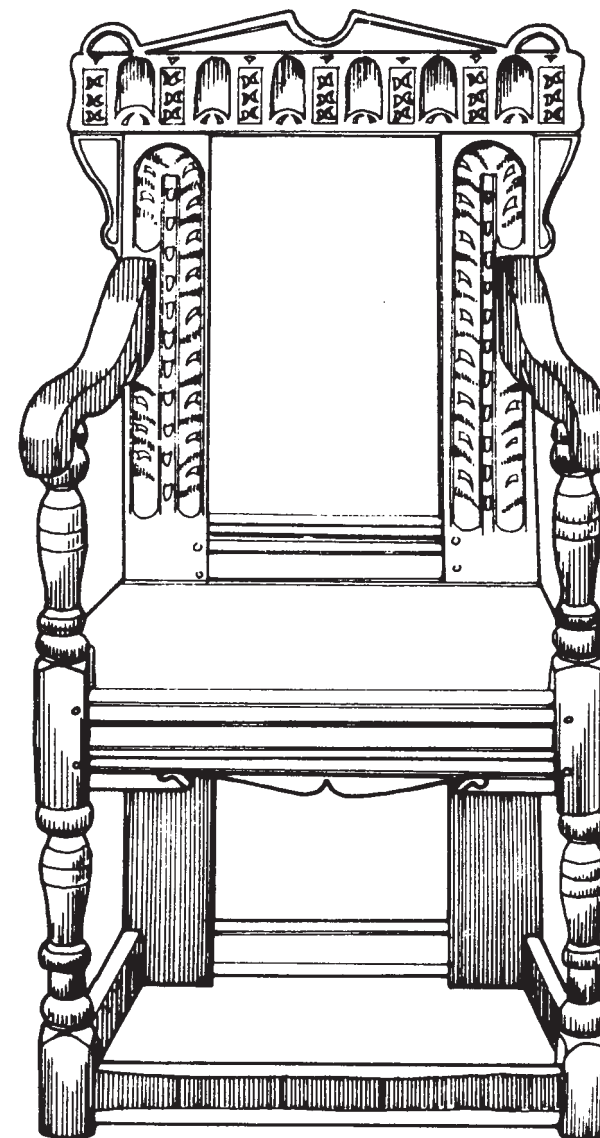


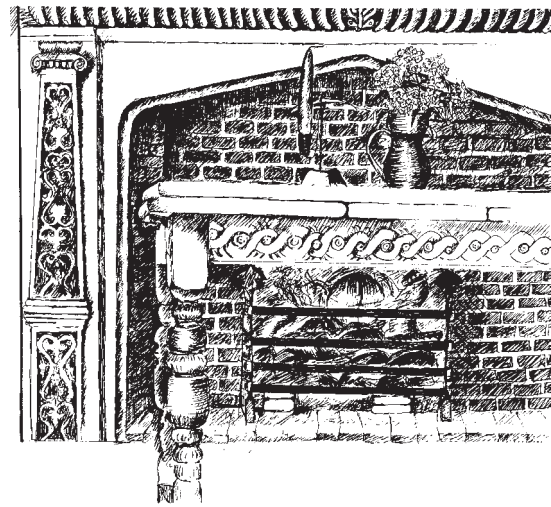
Below is the pattern carved along the table. It is known as ‘egg and dart’.



The gate-leg table in the little parlour can be folded down to make more space if necessary.

The kitchen table is a sturdy rough piece of furniture intended for use as a working surface for food preparation. It would have been scrubbed regularly to clean it — not polished!





TO SIT ON

Benches

Long wooden seats used by servants and children.

Forms

A cheaper, rougher type of bench.

Back stools

Stools with a long back piece for extra support — very like a modern chair for the kitchen or dining room.

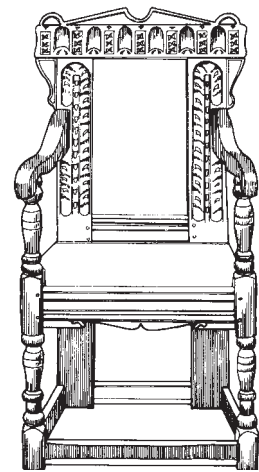
Chairs

For the most important people, these were closed in with arms as in the modern armchair.

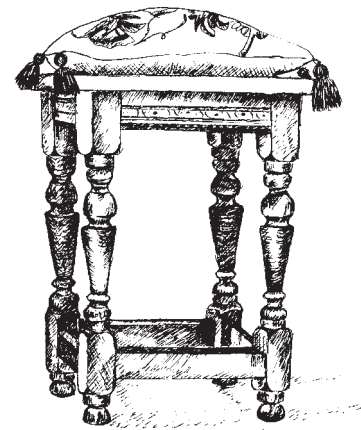
The **draw-leaf table** in the great parlour can be extended so that more people could sit round it. It is beautifully made and carved and a much more expensive piece of furniture than the table in the great hall.

'Table boards' were usually side tables with a similar function to a buffet cupboard. Table linen, glassware and food could be placed there ready for use. The origin of the name comes from the old trestle style tables where the table top (board) was separate from the table legs. ('Table boards' were sometimes just a square piece of board that could be balanced on a barrel, like a large tray.)

The **'horse'** in the **buttery** is a work table with splayed out legs. Carpenters still use them in their work.



Armchair

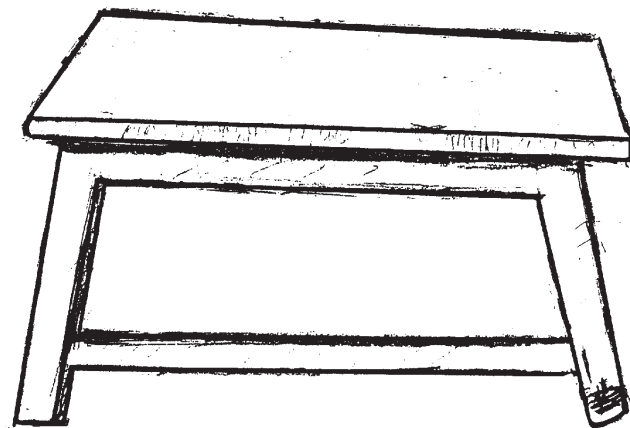


Joint stool

The **three legged bobbin-turned chair** in the great parlour is a special chair ideal for balancing on surfaces which might be slightly uneven. It was expensive as it is beautifully carved with **turned** (rounded) legs. Some say men sat in this chair the wrong way round with their legs through the gaps! This chair in the great parlour is made from yew wood, the other chairs are made from oak.

Joint stools

Stools where the frame is 'joined' together by slots and pegs.



Horse

TO STORE THINGS

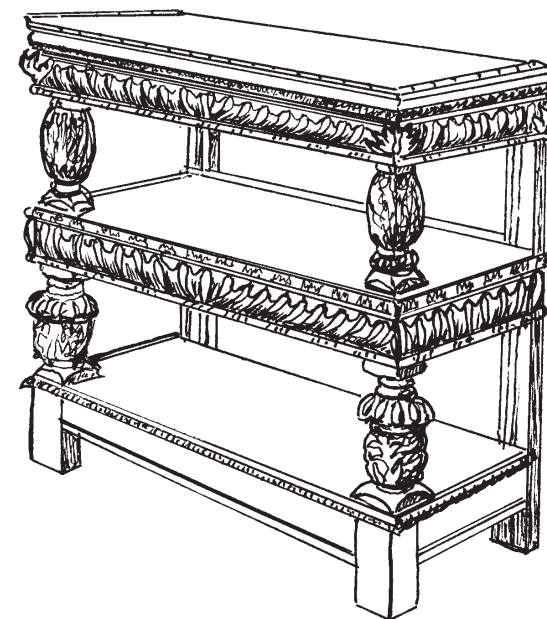
Personal possessions and household items were stored in chests or in various types of cupboard. The word **cupboard** started as cup board and meant a flat shelf to put plates and cups for everyday use or display. It developed from there.

Cupboards

The **tridarn** in the great hall is a three-tiered cupboard with display shelves, heavily carved and therefore a show piece—another name for this type of furniture was **court cupboard**. These were usually standing in the great hall to show off the family silver or pewterware. They were also useful as meals were eaten in the hall and items were to hand.

The **livery cupboard** in the little parlour was used to keep a store of bread and wine for quick service to table if the family were eating in the parlour, or for snacks between meals if required! Some households had livery cupboards upstairs in case they were seized by hunger in the middle of the night! The top could be used for displaying silver plate.

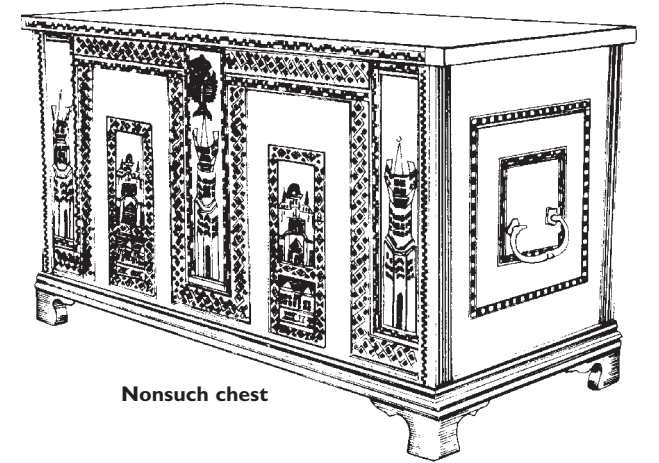
The **buffet cupboard** in the great parlour served a similar purpose.



Buffet cupboard

Chests

The **'Intarsia' chest** is also known at Blakesley as the **'Nonsuch' chest**. Nonsuch chests were inlaid with architectural designs meant to represent features of the famous Nonsuch Palace built for Henry VIII.



Nonsuch chest

The **linen chest** in the long gallery was to store the household sheets, napkins, table cloths and pillow cases. Linen was graded by the type of material it was woven from. The finest sheets were made from cotton and imported from Holland, flax also gave quite a good quality linen and was usually home grown. The roughest sheets were woven from hemp.

The **iron strong box**, to keep valuables in, is at the end of the long gallery. It has two keyholes, one hidden beneath a 'lip', and it would have been difficult to break into the box or to carry it away!

The **linen fold chest** at the top of the long gallery derives its name from the carved panels at the front, which look like the edges of folded sheets. It was used for storing general household items.

Chests in the bedrooms were used to store clothes and personal items. It was difficult to get at items at the bottom of the chest so a pull-out drawer was invented. Gradually the whole chest was filled with layers of drawers and the modern 'chest of drawers' came into existence.

Smaller chests were also known as **boxes** and were for storing personal items such as books, embroidery, letters, etc.