

## **AUCTION HARVESTING: Two unique bobbins found.**

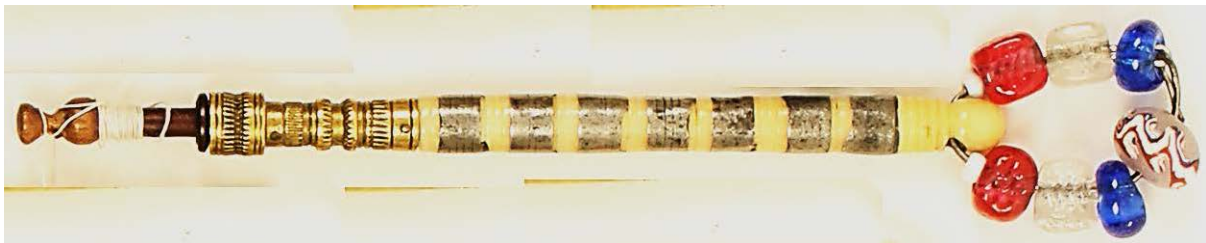
Brian Lemin. September 2016

### **Introduction:**

Auction harvesting is the digital equivalent of scavenging. I do not know that I should be proud about it. Almost all auction houses that I have contacted when I have found something interesting in their lots have raised no objections to me collecting something special from them in digital form. I suppose I am looking for the rare or very special that has historical interest to the lace tool community.

My most important find thus far has been the 99% certainty that I found England's oldest dated bobbins in what was literally a "Pile" of bobbins. I put the picture up on my screen and looked at each bobbin individually and nearly shouted eureka when I managed to isolate this very very old date on a bobbin. My problem is that the 1% needs to be confirmed by the new owner of the bobbin and as yet I have not managed to get that confirmation. I am keeping my fingers crossed.

Today's find is really quite different, I have found two bobbins that uniquely are made using some metal and a range of other materials, mainly wood, bone and pewter. Have a look at them.



Bobbin 1



Bobbin 2

## Analysis of Bobbin Number 1.

This has a wooden neck affixed to a bone bobbin shank via an ornate brass joining device.

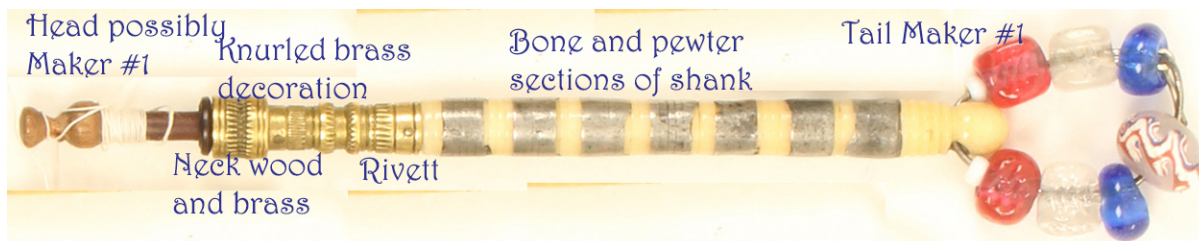
This brass collar and upper shank is not only decorated with "V" and rings of various diameters, it is further had the knurling tool (of a kind) applied. It is this that gives the decorative small cuts on the edges of the rings and "V". The join to the existing shank is fixed by a small neat rivet. The remainder of the bobbin shank appears to be original with pewter banding, which has had shallow turned rings applied.

The pewter is poorly poured which causes ragged banding edges; this is typical of the pouring process in those days (say 1840s)

The spangle looks as if it has beads typical of the time, square cuts, ponies and venetian bottom bead.

The fact that this is almost certainly what collectors call an "Adapted" bobbin. In its most simple form a not spangled bobbin can be spangled, in its more complex form it is using something that was not a bobbin (A paper knife handle for example) and turning it into a bobbin.

The other alternative is that it is a more modern and complex repair of a bobbin. It could easily be said that the turner used an alternative to the "cricket bat splice" to join on a wooden neck to a bone bobbin, with the repairer taking care to make the wooden replacement match as best as possible the original neck and head.



*Annotated Bobbin No. 1.*

## Analysis of Bobbin Number 2.

Whilst bobbin number 1 is a clear adaptation of an existing bone bobbin, this bobbin requires the addition of a creative process to such a repair, if that was the starting point for the repairer?

The wood neck that resembles the necks of Jesse Compton is joined by a brass collar and skirt design, that is embellished by shallow turned rings.

I am guessing that the original was a wooden bobbin because the "X" decoration on the brass skirt reveal the wood underneath it. This looks like a traditional "bitting", but it is not constructed in the same manner as a true bitted bobbin. There is no rivet showing as fixing device for the brass collar and skirt.

The wood/bone/brass sections of the shank would, in my opinion require somewhat complex planning and construction. The original shank would have to have been turned down to allow these various sections to be inserted to form a fully formed shank from the sections of wood, bone and brass.

The brass tail is clearly modelled on that of Jesse Compton. The spangle does not appear to have fully authentic beads for that time; mostly but not completely. I could well be proved wrong in this opinion.



*Annotated Bobbin No.2.*

### **Conclusion.**

These are two very unique bobbins that so far appear to have been unrecorded. Personally I like what has been done, it is clever and indeed quite attractive. I also feel that these repairs and or "reincarnations" (bobbin 2) were not done for personal gain or deception, rather by a very skilled "Arts and Craft" practitioner. Again guessing, I suspect that these bobbins were repaired or made for a lace maker and probably by a family maker.

The question I can't truly decide upon is whether these are "modern" adaptations or made closer to the time of their original creation. There are abundant examples of brass bobbins of historical times, all of which would have been turned. The above bobbins were clearly adapted by a knowledgeable turner, why else would the turner have gone to some pains to copy the originals.

There are numerous examples of wooden necks and head being "pushed" into a bone shank, I have always assumed this was to use a bone off cut effectively; but there seem to me to be different.

I desperately want to say that they are quite old adaptations, but honestly I have absolutely no idea or not enough knowledge to make that decision.

More knowledgeable persons than me are invited to drop me a note to either refute or add to my knowledge of these two great bobbins.

brido11 AT bigpond. com ; you will know how to make that a viable email address I am sure.