



Edward Gardiner. Set of Nine English Ladder Back Dining Chairs

Ref: PV004848

Price on Application

MAKER	Edward Gardiner
PERIOD	Arts & Crafts Movement , 1900-1909
YEAR	1905
STYLE	Arts and Crafts
ORIGIN	United Kingdom
MATERIALS	Oak
DIMENSIONS	H: 45.28 in (115 cm) W: 24.02 in (61 cm) D: 21.26 in (54 cm)
CONDITION	Good

About this piece

Edward Gardiner

Set of nine English ladder-back dining chairs. Chairs made by **Edward Gardiner** are rarely signed, but every chair in this set is signed E. D. Gardiner (see sample images attached). It is extremely rare to find a set of nine, let alone one that is signed, which will only appreciate more over time.

These ladder-back chairs are steeped in history. Their design has evolved from a long line of English vernacular chair makers dating back to the late 17th and 18th centuries. **Edward Gardiner** was encouraged to take up chair-making by **Ernest Gimson**, who in turn was encouraged by **Philip Clissett**. Clissett had been making traditional ladder-back chairs from as early as 1838.

Those skills were passed down to him, thus making him a famous master craftsman of his own generation, but also significant because of his connection with **Ernest Gimson**, a leading figure in the Arts & Crafts Movement and its call to honest, handmade goods.

Clissett was discovered by **Gimson** in 1890, whereupon **Gimson** set about learning the art of chair making from him, which he in turn passed onto **Edward Gardiner** in 1904. Gardiner then developed his own art and style of chair, always handmade, making them quite tactile, extremely strong and durable, yet very lightweight and easy to move around.

Excerpt on Gardiner

Below is an excerpt on Gardiner from *The Furniture History Society* online source:

Gardiner, Edward. Daneway, Gloucestershire and Leamington, Warwickshire; chair maker (fl. 1903–d. 1958) **Edward Gardiner** was a self-taught chairmaker who worked for much of his career for **Ernest Gimson**. By 1903, **Gimson** was unable to fulfil orders for the turned chairs which he made himself at Pinbury.

After unsuccessful attempts at subcontracting the work, he turned to the Daneway timber merchant and mill owner, **Edward Gardiner** senior, about placing a lathe in his sawmill. Gardiner's son, Edward H. G., began teaching himself joinery and woodturning and also learned from talking to the woodworker and blacksmith **William Bucknell**, as well as the wood turners at Workman Brothers in Woodchester, near Stroud.

Gardiner then set up workshops with **Gimson** as a partner, each man taking 10 percent of the profits. **Gimson** provided the designs, the earliest of which were dated August and September 1903. Examples of Gardiner's chairs, designed and exhibited by **Ernest Gimson**, appeared at the Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society, London, in 1906 and 1910.

In 1913, **Gimson's** direct involvement with chair-making ended as the chair makers, including **Edward Gardiner**, moved to Cubbington, near Leamington. However, **Gimson** continued to recommend them for "chairs for chapels that want something a little more Christian than the sweated High Wycombe industries can produce".

Indeed, **Gimson** praised **Gardiner** in a letter to the architect **Robert Weir Schultz**, dated 28 October 1913, when he wrote:

"My chairmakers have left Daneway Mill and gone to Cubbington, near Leamington, where they have all provision for bending, steaming and drying wood. There couldn't be a better chairmaker than **Edward Gardiner**."

Gardiner continued working into his seventies and died in 1958.

Condition and Restoration

Each chair is gently knocked apart, joints cleaned, glued, reassembled and clamped overnight, then set aside for a few days while the glue fully cures. They are then cleaned and waxed, and sent off to my traditional rush seat specialist to lay the new rush.

Measurements of Side Chairs:

- Height: 110 cm/43.31 inches
- Width: 48 cm/18.90 inches
- Depth: 41 cm/16.14 inches