



Ernest Gimson Made by Edward Gardiner. Arts & Crafts Ash Ladder Back Bedales Armchair

Ref: PV004779

SOLD

MAKER	Edward Gardiner
DESIGNER	Ernest Gimson
PERIOD	Arts & Crafts Movement , 1910-1919
YEAR	1919
STYLE	Cotswold School
ORIGIN	United Kingdom
MATERIALS	Ash, Rush
DIMENSIONS	H: 37.87 in (96.2 cm) W: 22.83 in (58 cm) D: 20.47 in (52 cm)
CONDITION	Good

About this piece

Ernest Gimson made by Edward Gardiner

An Arts and Crafts ash ladder back Bedales armchair. With three ladders each chamfered to top of each ladder, the top ladder is pegged with through joints to the arm supports, and full circle scribe marks to each of the joints. Chairs of this design were made for the Bedales school library. An armchair of the same design made for the Cragg sisters cafe in Aldeburgh, Suffolk is in the collection of The University of Reading.

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 passed down to him. Clissett became a master craftsman of his own generation.

He was discovered by Ernest Gimson, who spent a few weeks with Clissett in c. 1890 to learn the art of chair making, which Gimson in turn passed onto Edward Gardiner, encouraging him from around 1904. Gardiner then developed his own art and style of chair making in the traditional way.

Always handmade, usually from ash, making them quite tactile, extremely strong and durable, yet very lightweight and therefore easy to move around. This traditional way that English ladderbacks were made is where the origins of Shaker furniture-making tradition came from.

Ann Lee and her husband Abraham Stanley, the very first 'Shaker Quakers' to emigrate from the U.K. to Colonial America in 1774, took with them the essence of what Clissett and his forefathers had been refining for centuries before. Clissett was once described by Alfred Powell as resembling, "what the old aristocratic poor used to be".

I stumbled across this review on Gimson in *The Guardian* by the late Fiona MacCarthy, writing about a commemorative exhibition held in Leicester in 1969, 50 years after Gimson's death: As we eat off wooden platters bought at Habitat, then surely we should remember Gimson taking lessons in making the traditional rush chairs, singing "Birds of a Feather" with the cottagers around him (a performance which apparently he frequently repeated) and manfully leading the village in a Morris dance.

Surely Ernest Gimson was not just a fine designer but the first and greatest pseudo-country craftsman of them all.

Additional Measurements:

- Arm height: 65.8 cm/25.91" Inches
- Seat height: 44.5 cm/17.52" Inches