



Paul Matt. An Arts and Crafts oak eight seater 'Tretower' refectory dining table

Ref: TB SOLD 53

SOLD

DESIGNER	Paul Matt
PERIOD	Arts & Crafts Movement
YEAR	1931
MATERIALS	Oak, Wood, Slate, Twig

About this piece

An Arts and Crafts oak eight seater 'Tretower' refectory dining table designed by Paul Matt who was the key figure in the design and manufacture of Brynmawr Furniture, son of a German cabinet maker (who had made furniture to the designs of Charles Rennie Mackintosh). Matt served his apprenticeship with his father. He arrived in Brynmawr in 1929, keen to help in the Quaker project however he could. He set up the furniture workshop early in 1930. What is revealed by his designs for Brynmawr furniture is a knowledge of the Arts and Crafts movement. And continental Modernism, combined with a very practical approach to the materials, facilities and labour available. Length 6', Width 32 1/4". Circa 1931/32. I would like to thank Neil and Debra for providing me with much of the information above on Paul Matt and The Brynmawr Furniture Co. Here is some information I have managed to unearth about Brynmawr Furniture Makers particularly a wonderful testimony about a gentleman who spent much of his life at Brynmawr. 23.58 Testimony concerning Arthur Basil Reynolds (1903-1960): Arthur Basil Reynolds . had that strong sense of the indwelling spirit of God which perforce claimed kinship with everything good and of enduring value in other men and in the world at large. He worked for the continuity of the good life; and to preserve what was good from the past, to hold fast and perpetuate what was good in the present and to work for the hope of good in the future. He was a man of creative imagination. A craftsman with vision and courage who delighted in

the work of his hands and was able to inspire others with the same spirit. He had the seeing eye and the unerring hand to translate the vision into actuality. As he walked the countryside a twig in the hedge would suggest a shape of grace and gaiety and his penknife would speedily produce a dancing figure of elfish beauty. All that he touched witnessed to this creative power. His training as a cabinet-maker was put to use in the workshops at Brynmawr during the unemployment and distress of the depression, when he worked with Friends and others to provide employment and thus to bring renewed hope and self-respect to the mining community. He became manager of the Brynmawr Furniture Makers. An undertaking that successfully produced worthy and beautiful furniture.

Hereford and Radnor Monthly Meeting, 1961 WOW written by Garth Reynolds :- Sir/ Madam, I have today seen the Testimony to Arthur Reynolds on your web site. And I note that you would like to hear anything further about him. I am his eldest son. And was born in Brynmawr whilst he was working for the Brynmawr Furniture company. Initially he went there as designer, but after Paul Matt moved on to another similar project my father became manager. In, I believe 1938/9 we all moved back to his home town of Bridport in Dorset. When war broke out he joined up in the R.A.O.C. and rose through the ranks to Major. And was awarded the M.B.E. After the war he set up his own company Reynolds Woodware Ltd. in Ludlow, where he continued to make Arts and Crafts style furniture mainly following Ernest Gimson and latterly other solid wood furniture of his own distinctive designs. In 1948 I joined the company as an apprentice for five years. And then after serving for two years with the Friends Ambulance Unit International Service, as an alternative to the then compulsory military service, I worked for two years as a journeyman with Gordon Russell of Broadway, before returning to Reynolds Woodware. When my father died suddenly in 1960 at only 57 I took over the running of the company, with my younger brother. And although design styles changed over the years, much of what we produced was made of solid wood. And had at least echos of the Arts and Crafts movement. In 1976 I designed a suite of dining furniture in the style of Charles Rene Macintosh of which we were only going to make 30 sets, to mark the 30th anniversary of the company. However in early January 1977 the factory was destroyed by fire. And only some five or six sets were actually made and sold. Although we restarted in other premises in Ludlow various reasons we were not successful. And in 1979/80 the company folded and I went on to work elsewhere. I am now retired but still retain a small workshop, making a few pieces mainly in the style of C.R.M. If there is anything further I can tell you about the remarkable man who was my father I would be very pleased to help. Regards Garth Reynolds