



Ernest Barnsley. A highly important Cotswold School oak chest of drawers

Ref: CD 48 see also Cotswold 52

SOLD

DESIGNER	Ernest Barnsley
PERIOD	Arts & Crafts Movement
MATERIALS	Oak, Tin
DIMENSIONS	H: 36 in (91.44 cm) W: 40 in (101.6 cm) D: 20 in (50.8 cm)

About this piece

Ernest Barnsley. A highly important Cotswold School oak chest of drawers made around 1902 during the short period of his partnership with Ernest Gimson at Daneway. It is highly likely this chest was exhibited at the Arts and Crafts Society Exhibition in 1903. The catalogue entry in that exhibition reads :- 142 NORTH GALLERY. e. oak CHEST OF DRAWERS. Designed by A ERNEST BARNSELEY. Executed by H. PUGSLEY. £12 Ernest Barnsley designer and executed by H Pugsley is confirmed on page 106 in The Gimson and the Barnsleys pertaining to an almost identical chest illustrated on page 107. While closely examining the chest you will notice the subtle chamfer to the insides of the legs up to where the side semi-circular pieces meet at the bottom such a clever little detail making that joint sit perfectly together. Another very unusual detail is that the chest front does not have any exposed cross supports to the front like most other chests have. On this one they are hidden and recessed back in line with the side runners. The drawer fronts are about half an inch higher than the drawer sides making the drawer fronts themselves float on top of each other. E Barnsley was experimenting at the time trying to reduce the weight of chests of drawers and we can see that these details are used to lighten the weight of the drawers in comparison to the full face plank across the front of more common chest of drawers from all periods. A design detail so they do not wear away quickly on the runners yet still retain great strength. Therefore there are two design details which overcome this difficult problem of weight and to resist wear. This is also the same reason why the sides have semi-

circular supports and thinner panels rather than heavy planked sides. E Barnsley has spent a great deal of time to overcome a number of problems inherent in chests of drawers from earlier periods but in doing so he does not detract but enhance it's beauty. In 1901 and 1902 Ernest Barnsley and Ernest Gimson were setting up the new workshops and making pieces for the Jan 1903 ACES exhibition. In the beginning at Daneway Ernest Barnsley undertook the restoration of Daneway house and the two were also taking on the excess work load from Sidney who was still working on his own at Sapperton. Only five working drawings by Ernest and Ernest collaboration survive from 1902. Nearly all of their short time working together particularly after the ACES exhibition in 1903 (on the recommendations of William Lethaby) was taken up making furniture and panelling for The Church Of Edward The Confessor at Kempsey. Gloucester, designed by the architect A. Randall Wells and as we know EB moved onto building and architecture not long after that date because of disagreements between him and E Gimson. Measures Height 36", Width 40", Depth 20" .