Douro Chair in Packing Case

J.W. Allen

Sold



REF: 6442

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Height: 98 cm (38.6")

Width: 62.5 cm (24.6")

Depth: 152.5 cm (60")

Description

The Douro Chair was made by the majority of London campaign furniture makers from the mid 19th century, with W. Day & Son, J.W. Allen, Hill & Millard and The Army & Navy Store all illustrating it in their adverts. W. Smee & Sons of London illustrated a Douro Chair with a foot rest in 1850.

Comparing the shaped back of this chair with those advertised, it was probably made by J.W. Allen, with the other makers favouring a square back. The chair is made of birch with a caned back and canvas seat, both of which are hidden by the buttoned leather cushions. It is well made with the large iron hinges and webbing straps under the canvas seat (which is strengthened in its fixing by leather strips), suggesting it was intended for heavy duty use. This chair stands out from those illustrated in the various maker's adverts as it also has a foot rest, which when not required can be folded under the seat. The arm posts and back are kept in place when set up by leather arm straps, which can be moved to adjust the angle of the back.

As can be seen the packing case has screw in beech legs which raise it up to become table. The lid increases the table size by resting on lopers, which would have made the case very practical in its dual use. Allen describe this set as an 'Easy Chair in Chest to form a Dressing Table' but it would have been used for a variety of things including eating and correspondence. The case is painted black on deal and, like the chair, is strengthened. It is clamped on all the edges in iron and has iron handles. The lid has cleats which are not only tongue and grooved but each have two iron straps, used to strengthen the join. The lid has a mortise lock as well a bolt hole to the two sides to further secure it during travel.

Considering the Douro chair was made by several firms over a period of at least forty years, not many seemed to have survived. It is probable that like most other pieces of packing case furniture it was considered very practical for travel but not elegant enough for domestic use. As such most were probably discarded or destroyed on their return home. Circa 1865.

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