Christopher Clarke Antiques

Dealers in Campaign Furniture
& Travel Items

Portable Armchair by Alderman

John Alderman

Sold

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REF: 8023

Height: 102.5 cm (40.4")

Width: 62.5 cm (24.6")

Depth: 58.5 cm (23")

Description

As can be seen this mahogany armchair dismantles for travel. The arms are hinged to the chair back but the pins of the hinges are made to pullout easily to break them into two halves. The brass trigger mechanism to the undersides of the arms release them from their supporting uprights, which are also hinged to allow them to fold against the seat. When folded it can be seen that they have tenons joints to further hold them to both the seat rail and arms in a similar fashion to the Library Chair. The back is also hinged to fold down against the seat frame. It is interesting that this seat frame then sits, without fixing, onto a second frame which has the removable legs. The two iron rods that extend beyond the width of the top seat frame offer a reason for this.

The chair originally would have had two bars that fitted to these iron rods to turn into a sedan chair and it would have been used with out the leg frame. The chair does not suffer from being made like this and indeed is very sturdy with the weight of the sitter along with the tightness of their fitting keeping the two sections together. The turned legs have wonderful, spoked castors adding to their good height which means that the chair can be used as both a desk and an easy chair. John Alderman is listed in the London directories from 1860 as a manufacturer of invalid chairs, couches and carriages. At this date the term invalid had a far wider use and his sedan chairs would equally have been used for carrying the older ladies of the house up and down stairs as for a young officer to be carried in India.

As can be seen from the brass label to the seat frame, Alderman had premises at 16 Soho Square, London. He started out working for Thomas Chapman and became his partner in 1855 as Chapman & Alderman. They are known to have had premises at 8 Denmark Street until 1856, which Alderman later held under his own name. After 1880 he was also located at 50 Tottenham Court Road. In 1890 the company became Alderman, Johnson & Co. and moved to 138 & 140 Charing Cross as well as New Bond Street. In 1903 the company was transferred to John Ward Ltd, one of Alderman's competitors. The chair is very well made and the back has a particulary pleasing shape. John Alderman is perhaps best known for his folding sedan chairs which have folding iron carrying bars and they are not uncommon. This chair however, is far more refined and a less common piece. Circa 1865.

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