

# A cane bergère chair: who designed this chair?

A commission to re-cane an armchair immediately attracted my curiosity for I have never seen one using caned armrests and such very subtle application of chair caning techniques. The frame is unusual in that all members are curved to varying degrees.

Having exhausted all my own reference sources, enquiries amongst fellow furniture restorers and local



Bergère chair after removal of the old cane and cleaning of the frame



Bergère chair, re-caning completed

antique dealers as to the possible designer or maker drew no suggestions. The same reaction came from contact with a small number of RFS members and members of the Basketmakers' Association. The consensus at this stage was that it dates from the early twentieth century and that I should contact the V&A.

A response came from Max Donnelly and Johanna Agerman Ross at the V&A, who forwarded the enquiry to Kate Hay who suggested 'it could be mid European, possibly Hungarian or Czech'. I had previously liaised with, and met, Eva Ottillinger of the Hofmobiliendepot Möbel Museum in Vienna while researching Thonet caned furniture, so contacted her for further information. This museum was the Imperial Furniture Store for the ruling family when they toured the Austro-Hungarian Empire. She responded that from her researches the design is unfamiliar, suggesting I contact the new Bauhaus Museum, Weimar and Kunstgewerbe Museum, Dresden. Contact with them generated no information.

Then came an unexpected development. Johanna Agerman Ross contacted me with details of a chair by Adolf Loos dated 1928 in an auction at the Dorotheum in Vienna which has a very similar design and proportions – but without the armrests. Unfortunately, Eva Ottillinger considers that the chair I have was by a different maker.

If any member of the RFS has information which will lead to identifying the designer or maker of this chair then please contact me.

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