

An extremely rare George III "bALLOON" SHAPED aRGYLE & STAND
MADE IN IONDON IN 1799 BY dANIEL pONTIFEX.

Sold



Description

This exceptional piece is a particularly unusual example as it also has a stand, the first time we have ever seen this design. The Argyle is modelled in the very rare balloon form, with a reeded girdle around the middle of the main body. The balloon shape is not often seen and to find an Argyle in this form is unusual. The main body has four slender legs attached with stylised hoof feet, which are attached to the stand, with silver bolts. The stand has attractive incuse sides and the centre is domed and displays a Neo Classical urn. This piece has a slender "Swan Neck" spout and the harp shaped fruitwood handle is attached to the main body with tubular silver sockets. The circular pull-off cover terminates in a fruitwood finial. The front of the main body is engraved with a contemporary shield shaped Armorial, with Crest above. The reverse is engraved with a contemporary Crest. This example is unusual as it has a central interior conical heating compartment, with silver cover, where hot water, coal or a hot iron rod would have been placed to keep the contents warm.

The Armorial is that of the Watkins family of Badby Park, Daventry, Northamptonshire, impaling Clay, for Clarke Watkins (1772-1809), who married Maria Ann Clay at Holy Cross Church, Daventry, on 12th December, 1799. The date of the Argyle is also 1799, so we can conclude that it must have been a wedding present. This piece is in excellent condition and is fully marked on the main body and underside of the stand and with the maker's mark and sterling mark on the rim of the cover. Daniel Pontifex was a very fine maker and examples of his work can be found in the Royal Collection. Pontifex had workshops at 13, Hosier Lane, West Smithfield, when this piece was made. A.G. Grimwade in "London Goldsmiths 1697-1837, Their Marks and Lives", emphasises that his work shows a high standard of execution and delicacy of design. This is evident with this particular piece. Argyles were generally accepted to have been containers for gravy or sauce, the design incorporating some form of heat preserving element. The credit for inventing these pieces goes to Archibald Campbell, 3rd Duke of Argyll, as he and his Duchess became tired of their sauces arriving cold at the table in Inverary Castle. A painting of the 3rd Duke by Allan Ramsay, and an image of the castle, are attached.

Height: 8.1 inches, 20.25 cm.

Length, handle to spout: 9.25 inches, 23.13cm.

WeightL 24oz.