

An important Charles II Tankard and Cover made in London in 1681 by John Duck.

Sold



Description

This extremely fine piece is of a large tapering cylindrical form with a reeded skirted base. The sides are unusually embossed with a lower band of matted acanthus spears and palm motifs. The "S" scroll handle rises to a central bold beaded rat tail and five lug hinge and extremely unusual cast entwined dolphin thumb piece. The base of the handle terminates in an unusual shield shaped end. The stepped cover has a wide rim which is engraved with reeded bands and displays a pointed front. The flat top is also embossed with swirling acanthus foliage on a matted ground, with central flower head. The front is engraved with a beautiful set of betrothal initials and the date of the marriage 1682, all surrounded by an exceptionally executed prick dot engraved cartouche of entwined floral sprays. The Tankard is fully marked on the side of the main body and on the cover. It also has a good maker's mark on the handle. The Tankard also has a later wooden, brass bound and velvet lined, fitted case. John Duck was born in 1653 and in 1669 was bound apprentice to the goldsmith Roger Stevens of Foster Lane. Roger Stevens died very suddenly in 1673 and his wife Katherine took over the business. Duck became free in 1677 and in 1678 he married Hannah Stevens, the daughter of his old master. His mark is a goose in a dotted circle and was in use between 1678 and 1694. When Katherine Stevens died her will left the remainder of the lease of the Foster Lane premises to her daughters and "ready money, silver, jewels, goods and chattels whatsoever" to John Duck. It seems that he wound up the business, which may have belonged to Katherine, towards the end of 1693 and, despite the fact that he lived to a great age, no object has been found with his goose mark later than 1693/94. From December 1693, Duck was appointed assistant to Nathaniel Bowles, Deputy Assayer, by the Assistants of the Goldsmiths' Company. In July 1695 he succeeded Bowles and held the post until 1716. This piece is in outstanding condition with no repairs, very little wear, a good patina and no pushing of the handle. It has three very fine sets of marks and its original engraving. It is unusual, as it displays Betrothal engraving (rather than the usual Armorial) and would have been made as a gift to a married couple from a very wealthy relative/donor. It is also desirable as it is one of the acanthus decorated tankards, as nearly all are plain at this date and the dolphin cast thumb piece is very unusual and has been cast to the highest standard. The fitted case was made when it was last on the market, many decades ago, and this has helped maintain its wonderful condition. This is certainly one of the finest tankards, from this period, which we have offered over the years. It will be featured in the August 23rd, 2023, issue of Country Life Magazine. Height, to the top of the thumbpiece: 7.6 inches, 19 cm. Base Diameter: 5.6 inches, 14cm. Length, including the handle: 8.5 inches, 21.25 cm. Weight: 31.6 oz.