

ROYAL. QUEEN ANNE OF GREAT BRITAIN. A Highly important Queen Anne Britannia standard silver gilt two handled loving cup and cover made in london in 1712 by simon pantin I

Sold



Description

The Cup is of an unusual smaller size and stands on a stepped spreading foot. The bell shaped main body rises to an everted rim and displays a horizontal girdle around the lower section. The cup has two capped scroll handles and the stepped pull-off cover is decorated with reeded bands and terminates in a stylised urn finial. The Cup is in most excellent condition and is fully marked on the side of the main body and with the maker's mark and sterling mark on the edge of the cover. The front of the cup is exceptionally finely engraved with the Royal Arms of Queen Anne of Great Britain (6th February 1665 - 1st August 1714), with the Sovereign's Crown above and the Motto of the Queen "Semper Eadem - Always the Same" engraved on a banner below. The rear of the cup and cover are engraved with the Armorial and Crest of the Cocks family. The Armorial is surrounded by a beautifully executed cartouche of foliate strap work surrounded by coiled serpents, garlands of fruit and exotic birds in flight. The top of the cartouche displays a male mask, below a raying shell. This is some of the finest Armorial engraving we have seen on a piece of silver.

Our heraldic advisor has concluded that the Cup was almost certainly given by Queen Anne to her favourite, John Somers, 1st Baron Somers, one of the greatest legal minds of the age. A portrait of the 1st Baron Somers is shown. He held almost every legal office of State, from Solicitor General, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, Lord High Chancellor of England and, finally, President of the Royal Council to Queen Anne 1708-1710. He was the architect of almost every great legal document of the time, from William & Mary's Bill of Rights to the Act of Union between England and Scotland in 1707. He seems to have had an active social life too, being a member of the Kit Kat Club and a friend and patron to almost every great literary personality of the age such as Addison, Steele, Virtue, Congreve and Swift. While Queen Anne had long detested the Whig Junto, she came to like and admire Somers. Jonathan Swift called him "the perfect courtier" whose charm and good manners were almost irresistible to the Queen. He spent his later years at Brookman's Park in Herefordshire. He died, unmarried, on 26th April, 1716 and his estates passed to his eldest sister, Mary, who had married Charles Cocks 1647-1727. This is how Charles Cocks family Arms came to be engraved on this cup, as although they had no connection to the Queen, his brother in law certainly did and his wife inherited his estates, which would have included this important Cup and Cover.

Queen Anne was Queen of England, Scotland and Ireland between 8th March 1702 and 1st May, 1707. On 1st May, 1707, under the Acts of Union, the Kingdoms of England and Scotland united as a single sovereign state known as Great Britain. She continued to reign as Queen of Great Britain and Ireland until her death in 1714. She died without surviving issue, despite seventeen pregnancies, and was the last monarch of the House of Stuart. She was succeeded by her second cousin, George I of the House of Hanover. A painting of the Queen, with the Crown Jewels, is shown.

This almost certainly represents a very rare gift from Queen Anne of Great ...