

An extremely rare George III Triple opening Snuff Box made, almost certainly, in London circa 1780

Sold



Description

This very rare "Triple" opening Snuff Box was made almost certainly in London circa 1780. This example is unmarked, as it was almost certainly a special order and went straight from the silversmiths workshop to the client. After analysing the decoration, and design, it is our opinion that it was probably made in the workshops of Thomas Phipps and Edward Robinson, or George Cowdry, both premier box makers working in London during the late eighteenth century.

This very unusual example is modelled in the very rare "Boat" shaped form and is engraved, on the sides, with sunburst design around oval medallions containing flower heads, on the base and three of the sides, and on the front a contemporary Armorial, with a crossed branch cartouche below and tied ribbons above. The upper section of the sides displays a frieze engraved with various designs of bright cutting. The cover, unusually, has two hinged openings, also engraved with crisp sunburst designs around an oval flower head medallion. Most unusually, however, is that this piece also has an additional front opening, so three openings in all. This is the first time we have seen this design, which also adds weight to the theory that it may well have been a special commission. The box has very fine interior gilding and the engraving is in excellent, crisp, condition.

The Armorial is that as used by Sir Edward Astley 1729-1802, 4th Baronet of Melton Constable Hall, Norfolk. He was admitted to Pembroke College, Cambridge, and he succeeded his father as the 4th Baronet. He was appointed High Sheriff of Norfolk and stood as M.P. for Norfolk, a seat which he held until he retired. Sir Edward married the famous aristocratic beauty, and painter, Rhoda Delaval. She was the daughter of Captain Francis Blake Delaval and studied painting under Arthur Pond. Paintings of the 4th Baronet and Lady Delaval Astley, at her easel, are shown. They were known for their fabulous wealth and their seat was Melton Constable Hall in Norfolk considered to be the finest Restoration house in England in the Christopher Wren style. Through their marriage, Seaton Delaval became their second seat in Northumberland. When in London they resided at 11, Downing Street, today, the official residence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Images of Melton Constable Hall and Seaton Delaval are shown. Similar designs are shown in both "Silver Boxes" by Eric Delieb and "British Silver Boxes 1640-1840 - The Lion Collection."

Length: 3.75 inches.

Width: 1.45 inches.

Height: 1.5 inches.

Weight: 4oz.