Portable Sofa Bed

Sold

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REF: 80921

Height: 90.5 cm (35.6")

Width: 168 cm (66.1")

Depth: 81.5 cm (32.1")

Description

Although unnamed, this mahogany Sofa Bed shows all the signs of having come from a good workshop.

The design is known to have been made by Thomas Butler, Morgan and Sanders and by extension probably the other Catherine Street makers. Both Butler and his past foremen described the model with the same sentence: 'Sofa Beds, upon the best and most improved principle, forming an elegant Sofa, and may be transformed with great ease into a complete Four Post Bed'. The description sums up this sofa bed perfectly.

The originator of the design is not known but it probably has its roots in the late 18th century. The design is very similar to the Chair Beds made in Catherine Street. The sofa has a frame hinged to extend out from the seat which is supported by four removable legs. It is possible that the middle two, although contemporary, where an afterthought to further support the bed. Like the posts, the feet are fitted with good quality brass screw fittings. The seat frame of the sofa is removable and the evidence of tacks etc. show that a bag would originally have hung underneath the seat within which to store the legs, posts and canopy frame etc. The Chair Beds also had such bags although the vast majority have been removed over time.

Although the arms and back of the bed are removable, to use it as a four post bed they need to remain in place. The back has locating brass pins to the bottom and is fixed to the arms by an exceptional hinged (so it will lie flat) bolt to each side. The arms in turn have a pair of bolts each that screw down to fix to the base frame as opposed to the more standard method of fixing from the underside of the base up into the arms. The back of the sofa has the fittings to receive the shorter back posts, which is why it has to stay in place when used as a bed. The posts may have been reduced in height a little, again not uncommon, and have bolts to their tops to receive the two arched sides of the canopy. These two arches are hinged to fold in half for storage. In turn the two arches have five cross bars to support the mosquito net or drapes. The four corners and top of the arches are fitted with screw on brass finials to fix the canopy in place.

Chair Beds with their original posts are difficult to find but experience has told us that Sofa Beds with their posts are even rarer. Although the design was common to the Catherine Street makers, the crispness of the turning, the quality of mahogany and the Copes patent castors to the legs all suggest that this could have been made by Gillows. Circa 1810.

Size as a Sofa H 35 1/2 W 66 1/4 D 32
Size as a Bed H 87 W 66 1/4 D 78

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