



Christopher Clarke Antiques

Dealers in Campaign Furniture  
& Travel Items

## Major General Sir Frederick Cavendish Ponsonby Leather Trunk

Sold



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REF: 81141

Height: 64 cm (25.2")

Width: 122 cm (48")

Depth: 51 cm (20.1")

## Description

This trunk is made of black leather covered in numerous brass studs of various shapes and sizes on a softwood carcass.

To the front there is also a cast brass head with long hair to the top and a large decorative escutcheon topped by a crown with 2 mounted knights either side of a saint below. The trunk is circa 1700 in date and probably Spanish. The top is slightly domed but drops further towards the back. The interior has a later linen lining and the remains of the iron lock. There is also evidence that it had a later candle box.

By repute this trunk was acquired by Sir Frederick Cavendish Ponsonby during the Napoleonic Wars. He became a Cornet in the 10th Dragoons in 1800, a Lieutenant in June of the same year and a Captain in 1803. In 1806 he moved regiments to the 60th Foot as a Captain and a year later became a Major. He moved regiments again to the 23rd Dragoons in the same year and was appointed Lieutenant Colonel in 1810. He joined the 12th Dragoons in 1811 and became a Colonel by brevet in 1814 and ADC to the Prince Regent. In 1820 he went on half pay and was returned as the MP for Kilkenny, a position he had held since 1806, although he was not an active parliamentarian. He became a Major General in 1825 and was Governor of Malta from 1826 to 1835. He fought at most of the major battles of the Peninsular War including Talavera, Busaco, Barrosa, Salamanca, Vittoria, Burgos and Nive but perhaps is most famous for his ordeal at the battle of Waterloo. He was seriously wounded after a charge at the French and lay where he fell. A Polish lancer struck his lance through Ponsonby's back on discovering he wasn't dead, he was then robbed by a tirraillleur and another used him as a defence to fire behind, by the evening he was trampled by Prussian cavalry before a German soldier also tried to plunder him. He was then found by an English private who stood guard over him until he could be taken to a farmhouse to be treated. It was a miracle he survived.

Ponsonby's involvement in the Peninsular War ties in nicely with the origin of the trunk and it is probable that he attained it at this time. It would have been useful to an officer of his standing. The provenance for the trunk is Haile Hall near Egremont with the attribution coming from the family. Aside from its link to one of Wellington's officers and a hero of Waterloo, this trunk is desirable in its own right. Circa 1700.

Sold from Haile Hall near Egremont, former home of Lady Mary Ponsonby who died in 2003 aged 101.