

REF: 80344

Height: 38.5 cm (15.2")

Width: 33.5 cm (13.2")

Depth: 4.5 cm (1.8")

Description

This tinsel picture celebrates the return of Captain John Ross in 1833 after being thought lost on Arctic exploration.

Ross entered the Navy in 1786 and then spent time in both the Merchant Service and East India Company. He saw action and was wounded 3 times before making the rank of Post Captain in 1818. In the same year he commanded an expedition in search of the Northwest Passage. In 1829 he returned to the arctic commanding the steamer Victory. He was stranded with his crew for 4 years after their ship became stuck in ice. They survived and explored the area with the help of local Inuits. During this time Ross discovered the Magnetic North Pole. Eventually Ross left Victory and used the longboats from another abandoned ship to escape. They were found by a British vessel and returned home. On Ross's return the London theatre world had a new hero and a number of shows were staged in his honour. Tinsel pictures celebrated the theatre and as well as being bought as souvenirs, they allowed the public to re-enact their own miniature plays. They drew their inspiration from the shows of the day and could be purchased as monotone prints or coloured. They could also be enhanced with scraps of tinsel, leather, cloth etc.

This print is entitled 'Mr. Hislop As Captain Ross' and was published by 'M. Skelt. 11 Swan St. Minorities, London' as No. 75 in a series. It has been framed with a separate printed seascape to the background to give a 3 dimensional effect. Ross has tinsel to his uniform, hat, sword and shoe buckles and can be seen pointing to the distance, perhaps to the arctic. Although tinsel pictures were made for use in miniature theatres they were also treated purely as decorative pictures to be framed and hung. There are marks to this one showing how it could be folded to free stand but it is probable that it has always been framed. The frame is maple. Circa 1835.