Christopher Clarke Antiques

Dealers in Campaign Furniture
& Travel Items

Georgian Portable Cabinet

Sold

Christopher Clarke Antiques
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REF: 81903

Height: 38.5 cm (15.2")

Width: 91.5 cm (36")

Depth: 20 cm (7.9")

Description

A Georgian mahogany Portable Cabinet made to be easily removed from its hanging.

This is an unusual piece of furniture and was likely to have been made for a specific purpose. The 4 strong brass fittings to the back show that it was meant to be hung and the strong brass carrying handles that it was to be moved. The cabinet could be dropped on to corresponding bolts fixed to a wall to support it but easily lifted off them to remove it. This would suggest a traveller and perhaps use on board ship or maybe a coach although this would be less likely as the bumpy roads would not be conducive to working. It is well made and the various compartments offer a mix of storage. To the centre is a fall, decorated with a carved line of cock beading to its edge, which is supported by 2 brass quadrants. Behind the fall is a full height central compartment flanked by 3 open drawers to each side. The vertical dividers are cut to a fine serpentine shape. The ends of the cabinet are rounded with a lid to the top of each side to access a plain storage space. Below each rounded side is a drawer which swings open. The right hand side is divided for 3 inkwell sized spaces with a larger compartment behind. The left hand side is divided for 8 baize lined compartments, 5 of which are square with the others reduced in size by the curve of the drawer front. The size of these compartments would take medicine bottles that would be typical of an apothecary box of the period. The cabinet has a central, plain drawer with a smaller drawer to either side. Both these smaller drawers have secret compartments. With the drawer fully removed, a secondary drawer to the back can be pulled out. To the left side the secret drawer is plain, to the right there are 10 coin holders cut out of the solid.

There are no definitive clues to the cabinet maker but to the back is a storage label for the company R. Strahan & Co. Ltd who had premises at Stephen's Green, Kingsbridge and Wentworth Place in Dublin. Strahan were established in 1776 as cabinet makers at Chancery Lane, extending to further workshops in Henry Street by 1815 and then Leinster Street by 1845. They made furniture for a number of the important Irish houses and showed at the International exhibitions in the 2nd half of the 19th century. Their expansion continued in the services they offered, one of which was removals and warehousing and perhaps it was this diversity that kept the business going until 1969. There is also a smaller label giving the name Bennett. The quality of the cabinet work on this piece is good, down to the detail of the locks cut to fit the rounded sides. Early 19th Century.

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