

A Magnificent Capstan Inkwell c1833 -1868.



There are a number of features to this inkwell which make it probably the finest existing in pewter.

Firstly it is as large as they come being 10.3 inches in diameter and 4.5 inches high, with six pen holes and a ceramic ink container.

The base is decorated with three reeds near the edge and the drum has a beautifully engraved Coat of Arms incorporating the motto 'Garde L'Honneur' of Lieutenant Colonel Sir Henry Hanmer, KH.

Inscribed around the shield is 'Nec Aspera Terrent' which translates as 'And they fear not hardship'. This is for his knighthood in the Guelphic Order of Hanover which was conferred by the British Crown between 1815 and 1837 and awarded to Sir Henry in 1833. He lived at Stockgrove Park, Leighton Buzzard and was MP for Westbury then Aylesbury for the years 1831 to 1837. He was also High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire in 1854 and died in 1868.

There is a photograph in the Pewter Society Spring 1981 Journal, page 4 of a painting of The Somerset House Conference which then hung in the Queen's House, Greenwich. This conference was held in 1604 and shows a capstan or loggerhead inkwell on the table of the same design as the above.

This clearly demonstrates that this very practical design has been around for over 400 years. However they are rarely if ever marked by their maker so dating the survivors is difficult.

Sir Henry's may well be the earliest dateable example of this style as it must have been made between 1833 and 1868. This dating evidence together with an impressive provenance makes this inkwell an important example of its type. It has a lovely colour and is in good condition.

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