LANGFORDS
Antique & Contemporary Silver

George III silver argyle gravy jug

Henry Chawner

Sold

Langfords
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REF: 7808

Height: 177 mm (6.97")

Width: 152 mm (5.98")

Depth: 83 mm (3.27")

Weight: 300 g

Description

This is a lovely example and rare configuration of the heated silver gravy jug known as an argyle. This antique silver argyle is lidded and fitted with a hot water panel in the base to keep the gravy hot. Boiling water is poured in through the interior pipe, with its own hinged cover, at the rear of the jug. The purpose of the fine tube on one side of the pot is to release pressure.

This silver argyle - or argyll - jug has a pull-off cover featuring a ball-shaped finial. The handle is made from fruit wood, probably pear or apple wood.

One side is engraved with armorials and the motto Crom a boo, the motto of the FitzGerald family from Croom Abú, one of the ancient battle cries of Ireland, meaning Castle Croom Forever and referring to the ancient Castle Croom in Limerick. The FitzGerald family was a family as ancient as any in Ireland. They were so intermingled with the native Gaelic Irish that they were often described as "more Irish than the Irish themselves".

As for the argyle, it was John Campbell (1723-1806), the fifth Duke of Argyll, who hated the way that gravy arrived cold to his table from the kitchens of Inverary Castle, and who promoted a new piece of tableware designed to maintain the warmth of the gravy in its vessel. So, the argyle was born - a gravy warmer made in shapes similar to a covered coffee pot with a handle and spout. The gravy is kept warm by means of hot water contained in a compartment created by a double exterior wall, a compartment created by a false bottom or a central vertical cylindrical tube which holds a heated iron rod.

A secondary important feature was that the spout was placed at the bottom of the container which allowed the gravy to be drawn off from underneath the layer of fat that settled on the top.

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