Royal - Used at the Coronation of King George II. A highly important George II Cast Silver Gilt Coronation Canopy Bell made in London circa 1727 by Francis Garthorne.

Sold




REF: 374870



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Description

It is extremely unusual to have the opportunity to purchase silver which was part of a Coronation, however the item we refer to is an exceptionally rare and important George II silver gilt cast Coronation Canopy Bell which was made in London circa 1727 by Francis Garthorne.  As you will see from the images, the bell is of conventional form with reeded bands and loop attachment above.  The interior displays a baluster clapper and the main body is inscribed with the following "ONE OF THE BELLS BELONGING TO THE CANOPY BORN OVER KING GEORGE THE SECOND AT HIS CORONATION GIVEN TO THE LADY ELIZ GERMAIN BY THE HON.GEORGE BERKELEY HER BROTHER ONE OF THE BARONS OF THE CINQUE PORTS".At the Coronation of King George II, held on 11th October, 1727, the Canopy of State was carried by the members of parliament of the Cinque Ports, who could call themselves Barons for that day and sit next to the King and Queen at the Coronation banquet.  The custom of providing canopy bearers was one of the ancient privileges given to the Barons of the Cinque Ports as a reward for their support against the French.  The special status accorded to the Ports dates from the time of Edward the Confessor; as cited by Mantel T., in Coronation Ceremonies and Customs, but their involvement with royal occasions seems to date from Richard I's Coronation in 1189 when four Knights made a makeshift canopy and used their spears to hold it aloft.  The first record of silver bells being used to decorate each corner was at the Coronation of Charles II in 1661 and the last was King George IV in 1821.  As a reward for their services, the Barons were given one of the silver staves from the silver canopy and the silver bell attached to it.  In his position as M.P. for Dover, the Hon. George Berkeley, whose name appears on the bell, was appointed as a canopy bearer.  He was the youngest son of the 2nd Earl of Berkeley and sat in the House of Commons from 1720-1746.  He married Henrietta Howard, Countess of Suffolk, nine months after she ceased to be George II's mistress.  He had probably met her through his sister Lady Elizabeth Germain, a friend of Henrietta, whose name is also engraved on the bell.  An engraving is attached which shows the Coronation Canopy of King James II, with the bells hanging from each corner.  The Coronation of George II and his wife Caroline as King and Queen of Great Britain and Ireland took place at Westminster Abbey, London, on 22nd October, 1727.  For the Coronation, George Frederic Handel was commissioned to write four new Coronation anthems, one of which, Zadok the Priest, has been sung at British Coronations ever since.  George II in his Coronation Robes is also shown.A small group of Coronation bells survive today from the Coronations of George I, George III and George IV which are now contained within the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum, however they do not possess one from the Coronation of George II.  This particular bell is illustrated in Clayton M., "The Collectors Dictionary of the Silver and Gold of Great Britain and North America", Woodbridge, 1971, P.34 Fig 33b.  The extract is shown.The Bell is in excellent condition and is marked...


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