

MACKINNON

FINE FURNITURE



A PAIR OF GEORGE II MAHOGANY HALL CHAIRS

England, *circa* 1740

Sir Thomas Bootle (d. 1753) was Chancellor to Frederick, Prince of Wales.

William Masters, cabinet-maker, ran a successful business at "The Golden Fleece", Coventry Street, London. Important commissions included supplying furnishing for Blair Castle, Perthshire.

The inspiration for the basic form of the hall chair comes from the Italian Renaissance sgabello, which were stools with a back support often carved and decorated with heraldic imagery and placed in the hallways of grand palazzos. The sgabello chairs featured a solid wooden seat, which was easy to clean and suitable for entrance halls.

Hall chairs first appeared in England in the early 18th century. By the mid-18th century, designs for hall

chairs appeared in Chippendale's *Director* as well as other contemporary design books including Robert Manwaring's *The Chair-Maker's Real Friend and Companion*.

Throughout the rest of the 18th century each of the major English designers, including William Kent, Thomas Chippendale, Robert Adam, George Hepplewhite, Thomas Sheraton, and Gillows of Lancaster & London, all developed hall chairs of their own design.

A fine example of the sgabello hall chair can be found at Ham House, Surrey. George Nix supplied a total of eighteen sgabello hall chairs for Sir Lionell Tollemache, 4th Earl of Dysart, carved and painted with the earl's coronet and the Tollemache arms.

Dumfries House contains a very fine set of Georgian sgabello hall chairs made by the cabinetmaker Alexander Peter of Edinburgh. Peter, along with Thomas Chippendale, was one of the principle furniture makers at Dumfries House.

A particularly good pair of George II mahogany *sgabello* hall chairs made for Sir Thomas Bootle for the banqueting hall at Lathom House, Lancashire and almost certainly made by the cabinet-maker, William Masters.

The shield shaped backs inlaid with the armorial crest of Sir Thomas Bootle: a lion wreathed in foliage, the dished seats raised on shaped splayed legs.

The mahogany with good figuring and fine colour.

Literature:

Lucy Wood, *The Upholstered Furniture in the Lady Lever Art Gallery*, vol. I, p. 51, fig. 64 (illustrated)

Height: 3' 5³/₄" in (106 cm)

Width: 1' 6¹/₈" in (46 cm)

Depth: 1' 7¹/₄" in (49 cm)

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