

MACKINNON

FINE FURNITURE



A GEORGE III BROOMWOOD CHEST OF DRAWERS

Scotland, *circa* 1760

Scots broom, or *Cytisus scoparius*, is a deciduous shrub rarely growing beyond three meters in height, with its stems generally being about five centimetres thick. When properly treated, the wood is beautifully grained with high contrast between the heart and sap woods, but because of the limitations in size, it was used primarily for decorative borders and banding. Pieces made entirely from broom are exceptionally rare.

In 1758-59, George Sandeman was commissioned by the Duke of Atholl to make a suite of furniture for Blair Castle, Perthshire, using timber from the estate. Sandeman's use of Scots broom was highly unusual, and must have come about at the request of the Duke. Sandeman's suite included a number of tables and a spectacular bureau cabinet, which is still on display in the Derby Dressing Room at Blair Castle. The bureau took five workmen 211 days to make at a cost of £19. 10s. 8d. A visitor to Blair Castle in 1769, Thomas Pennant, recorded seeing the furniture and remarked 'A chest of drawers of Scotch broom, most elegantly striped, is a singular curiosity'.

There is no broomwood chest of drawers in the collections at Blair Castle today - making it highly likely

that this is it.

Likely supplied to the Dukes of Atholl

Attributed to George Sandeman of Perth

An exceptionally rare Scottish George III broomwood chest of drawers.

This remarkable and rare example of a Scottish chest of drawers is almost certainly by George Sandeman (1724-1803), a Perth cabinet maker. It is veneered entirely in Scots broom; the only other known examples of furniture in this timber are those by Sandeman supplied to the Dukes of Atholl at Blair Castle, Blair Atholl, Perthshire. The chest's carcass is made of oak, consistent with known pieces by Sandeman, and the drawers still retain their original blue sugar-paper linings, a feature specified in the 'Edinburgh Cabinet Makers' Book of Prices', 1805. The chest's form with three short drawers above others is also a characteristic typically associated with Scottish furniture.

Handles, escutcheons and locks original. Wonderful colour and patination to the timber.

Literature:

Anthony Coleridge, *Connoisseur*, George Sandeman of Perth: Cabinet-Maker, March 1960

Height: 2' 11⁷/₈" in (91 cm)

Width: 4' 0⁷/₈" in (124 cm)

Depth: 2' 0" in (61 cm)

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