

MACKINNON

FINE FURNITURE



INCE & MAYHEW

England, *circa* 1765

This outstanding commode can be confidentially attributed to the leading London cabinet-makers, William Ince and John Mayhew. The firm was first established in London in 1759, operating from premises on Broad Street, Soho and continued in business until 1800, and played a vital role in the development of English furniture, producing work of exceptional quality, as well as a highly influential pattern book, *The Universal System of Household Furniture*, published in 1762. Always at the forefront of fashionable taste, Ince & Mayhew received commissions from many of the most powerful and influential patrons of the day, including Queen Charlotte and the Prince of Wales, as well as the Dukes of Beaufort, Bedford, Devonshire and Marlborough. For these and other notable clients the firm supplied furniture for some of the grandest houses in England, among them Chatsworth, Blenheim and Carlton House, collaborating with such leading architects as Robert Adam, Sir William Chambers, James Wyatt and Henry Holland.

Our commode is typical of Ince and Mayhew's work and clearly relates to other pieces with which the firm is associated. The bold, rectilinear form is strikingly similar to that of a pair of commodes supplied to the 6th Earl of Coventry at Croome Court in 1764 and another related pair produced for the 9th Earl of Exeter at Burghley in 1767. The use of yew-wood is a characteristic feature of their work and one not generally found in furniture by other makers of the period. Yew-wood was used in a similar manner in a sideboard Ince & Mayhew supplied to the 3rd Earl of Kerry in c. 1769-1772, now in the Lady Lever Art Gallery, and a tambour desk believed to have been commissioned by the 1st Duke of Northumberland, still at Syon Park today. The marquetry too is consistent with Ince & Mayhew's work. The firm specialised in decoration of this kind, and the crossed palm branches to the doors of the cabinet are of similar style and quality to the inlaid ornaments on other pieces with which they are associated.

A commode of very close design, probably made for the Duke of Buccleuch, is in the family collections at Bowhill in the Scottish Borders. Identical ormolu corner mounts can be seen on another commode also in the Buccleuch collections. A commode of near-identical design is in the collection of the J. Rothschild Group at Spencer House, London. Close affinities can be seen with a secretaire formerly in the collection of Walter P. Chrysler and subsequently in the Leidesdorf collection, sold Sotheby's London, 28 June 1974, lot 108.

The design of the commode epitomises the neo-classical style as it developed in England in the third quarter of the 18th century. The bold rectilinear form reflecting the movement away from the serpentine lines of the rococo and is complemented by the wealth of classical decoration, including such characteristic elements as the Greek key fret to the frieze and the magnificent crossed palm branches to the doors, traditional symbols of peace and fertility.

Attributed to William Ince and John Mayhew

An important and very rare George III neo-classical satinwood, yewwood, rosewood and marquetry commode. The quarter-veneered top outline with purpleheart Greek key border, rosewood crossbanding and gilt brass gadrooned moulding, the frieze inlaid with Greek key pattern and with a drawer with central raised tablet applied with gilt-bronze swag and with each end with a smaller tablet applied with a roundel, the pair of doors veneered with satinwood and ribbon-tied crossed boughs and crossbanding similar to the top and enclosing three trays, flanked by pilasters applied with ormolu scallop shells and pendant leaves, on shaped bracket feet.

Literature:

Hugh Roberts and Charles Cator, *Industry and Ingenuity - The Partnership of William Ince and John Mayhew*, 2022, p.318, fig. 184

The Magazine Antiques, 1958, p. 418 (our commode illustrated with Frank Partridge)

Hinkley, *Regency Furniture*,

Height: 3' 1" in (94 cm)
Width: 3' 6 1/4" in (107 cm)
Depth: 1' 10 7/8" in (58 cm)

Stock Number

V03.43

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