

LANGFORDS

Antique & Contemporary Silver

George III Old Sheffield Plate globe inkstand

Roberts, Cadman & Co

Sold



REF: 4081

Height: 225 mm (8.86")

Description

Unusual, antique, Old Sheffield Plate orb-shaped inkstand. by pushing down the domed top's finial, the globe opens to reveal two silver-topped, blue glass bottles. One is for the ink. The other bottle, with its pierced silver cap, would originally hold pounce, a fine powder, most often made from powdered cuttlefish bone, that was dusted in order to dry ink and sprinkled on a rough writing surface to make it smooth enough for writing. The supports are of drawn-wire construction and the interior is tinned, a feature of Old Sheffield Plate pieces.

In 16th century Europe writing was considered to be a lowly task, and the aristocracy and upper classes would employ the services of a scribe or scrivener to write on their behalf using a quill pen and ink.

From the 17th century onwards, as the gentry began to undertake writing themselves, inkwells and inkstands became an essential accessory in every upper-class household. Silver, often combined with glass or crystal, was the most popular material used for inkstands and as well as having a practical use, some became more imposing and elaborate, often turning into decorative pieces in their own right.