

LANGFORDS

Antique & Contemporary Silver

Victorian silver-mounted horseshoe inkwell

G H James & Co (George Henry James)

Sold



REF: 7653

Height: 90 mm (3.54")

Width: 85 mm (3.35")

Depth: 63 mm (2.48")

Description

Unusually small and fine Victorian antique silver-mounted horseshoe inkwell with finely detailed silver mounts and fitted with a silver lid formed as a jockey's racing cap. The horseshoe is detailed in a most realistic manner with a silver apron which has been incised to imitate the hair of a horse's leg and silver nails fitting the shoes to its sterling silver horseshoe.

The hinged jockey cap lid features a gilded interior and opens to reveal a glass inkwell. Each silver component is hallmarked.

In the Victorian period, it was not unusual to keep the hoof of your favourite racehorse after it had died. They would be turned into commemorative objects, which were often given elaborate silver or gold mounts and used as inkwells, snuffboxes, ashtrays, pin-cushions, or keepsakes.

Horseshoes are also associated with good luck, and may have been welcome additions to a home partly for this reason. This association originates from the Christian story of the blacksmith, Dunstan (later, Archbishop of Canterbury), who nailed a shoe onto the devil's hoof, causing him great pain. Dunstan refused to remove the horseshoe until the devil promised never to enter a home that has a horseshoe above its door. Inkwells like this one may have been valued as talismans, as well as commemorative items.