

Finch & C^o



A CURIOUS VICTORIAN PAINTED WOODEN MINIATURE COFFIN

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CONTAINING A YELLOW CANARY SEEN THROUGH A GLASS WINDOW

INSCRIBED WITH THE LEGEND : 'IN MEMORY OF LITTLE JOE. DIED NOVEMBER 3RD 1875. AGED 3 YEARS'

SIZE : 14 CM LONG, 7 CM WIDE, 6 CM HIGH – 5½ INS LONG, 2¾ INS WIDE, 2¼ INS HIGH

LITERATURE

19TH CENTURY COAL MINERS WOULD TRADITIONALLY TAKE CANARIES IN CAGES DOWN INTO THE MINE WITH THEM. THE BIRDS WOULD ACT AS AN EARLY WARNING SYSTEM FOR CARBON MONOXIDE GAS. WHEN THE CANARY STOPPED SINGING THE MINER WOULD KNOW THAT HE HAD TO ESCAPE THE CHAMBER HE WAS IN. THIS PARTICULAR YELLOW CANARY WAS OBVIOUSLY A FAVOURED PET AS WELL AS A WORKING BIRD.