Finch & Co



PAIR OF ANGLO-IRISH SAILORS SCRIMSHAW PORPOISE JAWS

A FINE PAIR OF ANGLO-IRISH SAILORS SCRIMSHAW PORPOISE JAWS
DECORATED WITH A PORTRAIT OF BRITANNIA WITH HER SHIELD AND SPEAR, A CORNUCOPIA AND IMPERIAL LION, ABOVE HER HEAD A ROSE BRANCH. THE OTHER SIDE DECORATED WITH A FINE IMAGE OF A NAKED VEILED MAIDEN HOLDING A FLORAL BOUQUET, AN IRISH HARP WITHIN A WREATH OF OAK AND LAUREL LEAVES ABOVE HER HEAD
SUPERB SILKY AGED PATINA
CIRCA 1850 – 60
SIZE: APPROX 51CM LONG, 38.5CM WIDE – 20 INS LONG, 15¼ INS WIDE

LITERATURE

ARTICLES FASHIONED BY THE SCRIMSHANDER ON BOARD SHIP FALL INTO FOUR BROAD CATEGORIES, SOMETHING USEFUL, DECORATIVE, ORNAMENTAL OR A TOY. DECORATIVE ITEMS WERE SOMETIMES ETCHED WITH DESIGNS TRACED FROM THE PAGES OF ILLUSTRATED 19TH CENTURY MAGAZINES SUCH AS 'GODEY'S LADY BOOK'. USING A NEEDLE NORMALLY EMPLOYED FOR STITCHING SAILS THE SAILORS WOULD ENGRAVE THE SOFT SMOOTH SURFACE OF THE BONE OR TOOTH PATIENTLY FOLLOWING THE OUTLINE OF THE DESIGN. THE PRICKED AND TRACED IMAGE WOULD THEN BE ETCHED AND COLOURED IN WITH INDIA INK OR PITCH. THE MOST SKILFUL AND CREATIVE DREW THEIR DESIGN IN PENCIL AND THEN WENT OVER IT WITH THE NEEDLE.
SCRIMSHAW WAS A PASSION AND SOME SHIP-OWNERS TRIED TO TAKE MEASURES TO SUPPRESS IT BECAUSE THE MEN NEGLECTED THEIR JOBS OVER IT. EVEN THE TOP MAN WOULD TAKE HIS TOOLS UP INTO THE CROW'S NEST WITH HIM AND JEOPARDISED ALL CHANCES OF A CATCH BY FAILING TO KEEP A LOOK OUT.