Christopher Clarke Antiques

Dealers in Campaign Furniture
& Travel Items

Thomas Butler Chair Bed

Thomas Butler

Sold

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REF: 81977

Height: 107 cm (42.1")

Width: 91 cm (35.8")

Depth: 69 cm (27.2")

Description

Butler quite correctly described his Chair Bed in adverts as 'Upon the best and most approved principle forming a handsome easy chair, and is with great ease transformed into a Tent Bed, with Furniture and Bedding complete'.

It does convert very quickly from a wing chair that would offer protection against draft, into a good and sturdy bed. The sides are also fitted with hinges that slot into pocket fittings on the chair, allowing them to be completely removed if desired. This was possible for use in a hot climate. It equally packs down easily to a 'coffee table' size for transport. The seat of the chair is made of a three fold, slatted pine frame that pulls out to form the bed. Brass capped legs are then screwed into place to support the frame. A curiosity of this chair is that it has an extra pair of legs that screw into the middle section of the bed frame to give further stability. We have seen this on some other examples of this type of chair and it makes perfect sense from a practical view point. The extra legs have different turnings and screw fittings to the rest but are of the same period. It is probable that shortly after purchase the owner asked for an extra set of legs to be added.

The chair has a brass 'Butler's Patent, Catherine St.' plaque to the front of the seat and an interesting provenance that shows they were also purchased for uses other than military. It was owned by the bank Child & Co. whose policy was that a Duty Director had to sleep each night in the bank. Certainly the bank were well established at the time of manufacture. British Campaign Furniture by Brawer illustrates photos and adverts for this type of bed by Butler as well as Morgan and Sanders. Circa 1800. The chair has upholstered red nubuck suede cushions to the seat, back and sides as well as a spare to help form the mattress when used as a bed. Dimensions as a chair are given.

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