Henry Bessell Patent Table

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£1,450

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REF: 83989

Height: 73.63 cm (29")

Width: 182.81 cm (72")

Depth: 67.92 cm (26.7")

Description

A walnut and beech Folding Table by Henry Bessell of Bristol.

The two plank top is made of walnut with the legs and side rails etc. made of stained beech. To the apron of one end of the table is a pressed metal label that notes 'Henry Bessell's Patent Folding Table No. 10415'. The patent likely refers to the method of fixing the legs. As is common with many 'farmhouse' size folding tables, the legs are set as two pairs, hinged to the underside of the top. On past such tables we have had there has been a variety of ways used to fix the two pairs in position for use to ensure a firm fix. One used an iron hook to each corner leg, fitting to an eyelet on the tables apron; another had a long pair of hinged bars fixed to the centre of the underside of the top which bolted to stretchers set between the legs. The objective is to provide a strong fitting with as little movement as possible to ensure stability.

Bessell's method achieves this. Each pair of legs is united by a stretcher to their top and sit within the apron board to both short ends. These apron boards are fitted with two large bolts that pass all the way through with a round cap to fix them showing to the exterior side. The bolts are hinged part way along their barrel so that they can be moved into position when the hinged legs are lifted so that their stretcher sits parallel to the apron board. The bolts can then drop into the two slots cut into the leg stretchers and the wing nuts to their ends tightened. When this is done the legs have very little movement and are surprisingly sturdy given the size of the table.

In the past we have had an almost identical table but for the fact that it was made of North American Birch, was a little larger and had no label. It is probable that it was also made by Bessell but perhaps sold wholesale.

This might have been meant for use as an extra table for a party, to use in the garden or perhaps for harvest workers. It is a good size that would work well for dining in a narrow space, to go behind a sofa or in a hallway. When set up, it is rigid but folding the legs makes it easy to store when not in use. Circa 1890.

The size set up is given.

More can be read on Henry Bessell by clicking on his name above.

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