Earl of Dudley's Ceremonial Uniform Trunk

Sold



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REF: 82789

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Height: 27.93 cm (11")

Width: 71.09 cm (28")

Depth: 38.09 cm (15")

Description

A painted tin Uniform Trunk supplied by Robinson & Steele to the Earl of Dudley.

The trunk has a brass hasp lock which is stamped 'Machine Made Lever With Modern Improvement' to the outside and the number '4502' to the underside. Underneath the hasp are two slide bars that when pushed apart will rather neatly further secure the lid. The lid interior also has a cushioned seal running around it to ensure that nothing harmful to the contents will get in. When open, the lid is held by a ribbon to each side. The trunk is painted black to the outside and blue to the interior.

Given the brass engraving plate to the top is for 'His Excellency The Earl of Dudley', the tin would have been for the Earl's ceremonial uniform. William Humble Ward, the 2nd Earl of Dudley was the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland from 1902 to 1905. With the role came the automatic position of ex officio Grand Master of the Order of St. Patrick. The National Library of Australia's photograph of Dudley shows him in the Grand Master's uniform. His uniforms needed for the different roles that came with the position of Lord Lieutenant came from Robinson & Steele, Dublin military tailors at 11 Dawson Street and their paper label is on the inside of the tin's lid. Whether this trunk held the Lord Lieutenant's uniform, that of the Grand Master or a uniform required for a further role is not known. Robinson & Steele were the pre-eminent military tailors in Dublin either side of 1900 and as their label notes enjoyed the patronage of the Lord Lieutenant.

Dudley was born on the 25th of May 1867 and died on the 25th of June 1932. He sat with the Conservatives in the House of Lords and was Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade from 1895 until he took up the role of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. He was considered competent at the job and was included as a character in Ulysses by James Joyce. After Ireland, he was appointed as the 4th Governor General of Australia in 1908; a position he held for three years. His love of ceremony and extravagance coupled with his meddling in political matters made him unpopular with both the Australian public and politicians. He took command of the Queen's Own Worcestershire Hussars in 1913.

Dudley fought with the Imperial Yeomanry in the 2nd Boer War before he became Lord Lieutenant. After his return from Australia he took command of Queen's Own Worcestershire Hussars in 1913 and was with them for beginning of the Gallipoli Campaign. He retired a lieutenant colonel after an attachment to the 40th Division's staff.

This trunk also bears a label to exterior for Meyer & Mortimer of 36 Conduit Street. They were also military tailors and it is possible that they either carried out a repair for Dudley, when he was back in London, or he re-used the trunk for a uniform that they supplied.

The trunk has been well used in transporting the Earl's uniform and has three knocks to the top as well as wear to the paint in places. However, this probably isn't more than might be expected and it doesn't look bad for it. The interior and the locking system is better than most such trunks that you see as, perhaps, befits the importance of its original contents. Circa 1902.

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