Emmett & White
ANTIQUES & INTERIORS

Bilston Enamel Patch Box: "Leicester Infirmary", Late 18th Century

£145

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REF: 1223

Description

A charming late 18th-century Bilston enamel patch box, delicately decorated in pink enamel and with a hinged lid depicting a scene titled "Leicester Infirmary." Small, refined, and full of Georgian character, this attractive object combines the decorative appeal of English enamel with a rare and evocative topographical subject.

The circular box is finished in a soft pink enamel, a colour that provides an elegant ground for the hand-painted decoration. Its hinged cover carries a detailed view of Leicester Infirmary, carefully titled to identify the building and transforming the piece from a fashionable personal accessory into a miniature record of a significant local institution. The image is framed by the fine metal mount and retains the charm of a small-scale Georgian souvenir.

Patch boxes were popular personal accessories in the 18th century, made to hold the small beauty patches worn by both women and men as fashionable adornments. Bilston, near Wolverhampton, became one of the leading centres for enamelled boxes during the period, producing an extraordinary variety of colourful and often witty designs. Views of country houses, public buildings, romantic scenes, and sentimental inscriptions were especially popular, allowing an everyday object to serve as a memento, conversation piece, or small token of affection.

This example is particularly appealing for its unusual connection to Leicester Infirmary. The combination of an elegant pink enamel ground, a named architectural scene, and the miniature scale of the box gives it both decorative refinement and historical interest.

A delightful addition to a collection of Bilston enamels, Georgian boxes, English decorative arts, or local-history souvenirs. It would display beautifully in a cabinet of curiosities, alongside other small enamels, or as part of a carefully assembled collection of 18th-century objects.

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