Emmett & White
ANTIQUES & INTERIORS

Bilston Enamel "Plymouth Dock" Patch Box

£125

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REF: 1226

Description

A charming early 19th-century Bilston blue enamel patch box, the hinged lid inscribed **"A Present from Plymouth Dock."** This delightful miniature keepsake combines the rich cobalt-blue enamel and sentimental wording for which Bilston patch boxes are so highly prized, with a particularly appealing reference to the historic naval town now known as Devonport.

Finely made in enamel on copper, the box is of the small, elegant form associated with Georgian and Regency personal accessories. Its vivid blue ground would have provided a luxurious setting for the inscription, transforming a simple practical object into a token of affection, friendship, or remembrance. Such boxes were often purchased as souvenirs or gifts, their messages designed to preserve a connection with a place, occasion, or giver.

Patch boxes were originally intended to hold small beauty patches: tiny shaped pieces of black silk or velvet worn fashionably on the face during the 18th and early 19th centuries. By the Regency period, they had also become cherished novelty and presentation objects, admired for their exquisite workmanship, bright enamel colours, and often witty or sentimental mottos.

The inscription is especially evocative. Plymouth Dock was the historic name of the town that became Devonport in 1824, giving this piece a strong connection to Britain's naval and maritime history. Its survival offers a tangible link to the social world of the Regency period, when travellers and visitors acquired such objects as intimate souvenirs of their journeys.

A beautiful example of Bilston enamel, ideal for collectors of Georgian and Regency boxes, English enamels, maritime souvenirs, or small objects of personal history. It would make a refined addition to a cabinet collection or a thoughtful gift for a lover of antique sentiment and craftsmanship.

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