

# GODSON & COLES

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92 Fulham Road, London, SW3 6HR, United Kingdom - Tel: +44 (20) 7584 2200 - Web: [www.godsonandcoles.co.uk](http://www.godsonandcoles.co.uk)



## **A George III Period Mahogany Fretwork Library Table**

REF1111

Possibly made by Alexander Peter

British, circa 1763

The rectangular solid mahogany top with moulded edge over a frieze of intricate and finely executed fretwork on all four sides with two drawers to one side and one drawer to the reverse. The legs similarly decorated with carved and pierced brackets to the corners and terminating in finely moulded block feet with original casters.

This exquisite mahogany centre or library table is one of the finest examples of fretwork furniture known. The detailing and attention to detail throughout is extraordinary and it has survived in remarkably crisp condition and has acquired a glorious colour and untouched patina throughout.

Height: 33 1/2 in (85cm), Width: 55 3/4 in (141 cm), Depth: 27 3/4 in (70.5cm)

## **PROVENANCE**

Sir James Clerk. 3rd Baronet of Penicuik, for Penicuik House in Scotland

£ 85000

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## **DESCRIPTION**

### **Penicuik House**

Penicuik House was built in 1761 by Sir James Clerk, a wealthy Scottish landowner and merchant. Sir James's brother John married Susannah Adam, daughter of William Adam and sister of Robert Adam, whom he consulted when building Penicuik House. One of the glories of the house was the ceiling painted by Alexander Runciman in the Saloon, inspired by James Macpherson's Works of Ossian (the room was subsequently known as Ossian's Hall). This was complimented by a comprehensive furnishing scheme commissioned by Sir James from tradesmen in Edinburgh but also including various pieces purchased by his agents, including Robert Adam, in Italy. One of the gilt Rococo mirrors made by James Thomson of Edinburgh for Ossian's Hall was recently purchased by National Museums Scotland.

Tragedy struck Penicuik House on a Sunday in 1899 when the household was at church and a fire spread, all but destroying it. A significant amount of the contents were salvaged including this centre table and the family took the decision to relocate to the adjacent stable block, also a creation of Sir James. This gave them the distinction of being the first landed family to forsake their seat for the stable block and Lady Clerk, and her successors, created a house of huge charm. Features such as marble chimneypieces and joinery were salvaged from the main house together with much of the furniture and paintings and installed in the stable block to create one of the most romantic and beautiful interiors in Scotland.

### **Alexander Peter (1713-1772)**

Alexander Peter was a Scottish cabinet maker, based in Edinburgh. He was responsible for one of the finest surviving collections of documented Scottish furniture and it is largely this on which his reputation and significance rests. Much of the furniture was supplied to the Earl of Dumfries to complement that made by Thomas Chippendale for Dumfries House, Ayrshire, as part of one of the most celebrated furniture commissions of the 18th century.