



18th Century Antique

Originally from Methley Hall, near Leeds, which was remodelled by Carr of York in the late 18th century. Methley was demolished c.50 years ago, and the chimneypiece was removed but remained in the property of the family. This finely-detailed fireplace features a siena marble frieze, flanked by rosette paterae, with a delightful centre tablet depicting a pair of exceptionally carved 'billing' doves against a foliate background. Billing doves were a popular decorative subject in the eighteenth century, symbolising lovers' embraces. The jambs are formed of acanthus-decorated consoles above hanging garlands of flowers.

Dimensions

Height 52½in (133.4cm) width 75¾in (192.4cm)

Internal height 42in (106.7cm) width 45in (114.3cm)

Shelf depth 9½in (24.1cm)

Reference

G232

Provenance

It was made for Methley Hall in Yorkshire (now demolished), which was remodelled in the late 1760s by John Carr of York (1723-1807) for John Savile, 1st Earl of Mexborough. The interiors of this important house were photographed for *Country Life* in 1907.

A similar fireplace featuring billing doves and floral swags can be found at Croome Court in Worcestershire. It was carved by John Wildsmith for George, 6th Earl of Coventry, circa 1760. Shortly afterwards Croome was remodelled by Robert Adam who, from 1765, collaborated with Carr of York on the interiors at Harewood House in Yorkshire. The connection is conjectural but it is possible Carr could have been inspired by the example at Croome.