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A GEORGE III ORMOLU MOUNTED HAREWOOD AND MARQUETRY SERPENTINE COMMUNE, CIRCA 1765

Tulipwood, harewood, sycamore and marquetry with gilt bronze mounts.

The top of the serpentine commode is inlaid with a marquetry panel of musical trophy hanging from a ribbon within a foliate cartouche, flanked by sprays of ribbon tied flowers, on a background of harewood. It has a broad cross-banded border and moulded tulipwood edge.

The doors at the front have wide, cross-banded borders and green-stained banding with Greek key ornament at the angles, the centre is veneered in dark, stained harewood inlaid in the centre of each door with a classical vase filled with flowers, with gilt bronze banding down the side of one door. The doors open to reveal three graduated drawers with drop ring handles with circular moulded back plates. The sides are similarly veneered and inlaid with a ribbon-tied spray of flowers. The shaped apron with scrolling floral gilt bronze mount and the protruding angles applied with floral and foliate mounts running down to acanthus sabots.

Possibly supplied to Thomas Edwards-Freeman, Batsford Park, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire, and by descent with the house to John Freeman-Mitford, 1st Baron Redesdale (1748-1830), and by descent to his son

John Thomas Freeman-Mitford, 1st Earl Redesdale (1805-1886), Batsford Park, Gloucestershire and thence by descent

Sale, Bruton Knowles & Co., Gloucester, 30th April to 2nd May, 1919, lot 387

Bought by William Hesketh Lever, 1st Viscount Leverhulme (d.1925) from M.Harris and sons 26 May 1919 for £815 and thence by descent.

Lucy Wood, 'Catalogue of Commodes', 1994, p. 165, figs. 152-4 and Appendix X3318, p. 332

The commode belongs to a small number of commodes all of which would appear to have been made by a group of continental craftsmen working in England during the 1760s and 1770s. The best known of these emigré craftsmen was Pierre Langlois who had premises in Tottenham Court Road.

This piece, although it relates to work considered to be by Langlois, differs in its overall shape which is more curvaceous and in the execution of the marquetry which is somewhat more symmetrical and formal. The designs incorporated in the marquetry, in particular the musical trophy inlaid on the top are very close to schemes of marquetry found on French pieces. The vases on the doors which are in the so-called goût grec relate to engravings of Delafosse, which was one of the most important sources for French craftsmen at this period.

The commode is similar to one purchased by Lever a year later from Moss Harris and Sons which came from the collection of Richard Penn, 4th Earl Howe. The form of the Howe commode is different in that it has taller legs and a more bombé shape but again, the inlay of the musical trophy on the front is very similar to that on this commode and it has similar ribbon-tied sprays of flowers. The execution of the marquetry would appear to be by the same hand although the carcass construction is very different. This would point to a specialist workshop that was employed in supplying marquetry panels. Both commodes have the same gilt bronze apron and toe mounts.

Measurements:

Width: 58.75 in	149.2 cm
Depth: 24 in	61 cm
Height: 31.5 in	80 cm