

Armada Service

Acquisition of the earliest known surviving set of English dining silver. The set comprises of 26 silver dining dishes of different dimensions, profiles and weights and each fully hallmarked for London and engraved with the arms of Sir Christopher Harris of Radford, Devon, and his wife Mary Sydenham. Dated: 1581, 1599, 1600, 1601 with four different mark's marks. According to Harris family tradition the set is known as the Armada service as it was made from New World silver captured from Spanish ships after the Armada and presented to Sir Christopher for services rendered. A document signed by Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Francis Drake records that when Raleigh captured the Spanish Carrack Madre de Dios in 1592, Harris was appointed commissioner to safe guard the booty. He may well have been repaid in kind for his part in guarding the treasure.

Nation/region

London

Grant awarded

£900,000

Award date

28/05/1992