

AN IRISH WILLIAM IV PERIOD CENTRE TABLE
WITH PIETRA DURA ARMORIAL TOP

Dimensions: H: 29 in / 74 cm | Dia: 38 in / 97 cm

9882

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An Irish William IV Period Centre Table

The Specimen Pietra Dura Marble Armorial Top
By Joseph Darmanin of Malta

The shaped circular top finely inlaid with the arms of General Robert Edward King, 1st Viscount Lorton (1773–1854), masterfully executed in pietra dura and specimen marbles upon a fossil-rich yellow marble ground. The inlaid work is of exceptional delicacy, having all the hallmarks of the greatest heraldic tops by the famous makers, including the use of delicate shaded marbles.

The richly carved base, unmistakably Irish in conception and executed in dense, darkly patinated mahogany, is by Strahan of Dublin, one of the foremost cabinetmakers of his day. The double C-scrolled tripartite base enriched with carved flowers leading to the acanthus clasped pedestal support, on brass hidden castors.

The frame stamped ‘Strahan’ and retaining its original paper label from Strahan’s Henry Street workshop. The underside of the marble top equally bearing its original trade label of ‘J. Darmanin & Sons […] Malt.’
The base, Irish, circa 1835
The top, Maltese, circa 1830

Literature:
This table was most likely acquired by Lord Lorton on one of his Grand Tours—either in 1825 or 1836—aligning with Darmanin’s transition to “& Sons.” The Irish base, dated slightly later, suggests the top was mounted upon return, a common practice for souvenirs of elite European travel. The table remained at Rockingham House until its mid-20th-century demolition, a rare survivor from what was once considered John Nash’s finest classical house in Ireland.

J. Darmanin & Sons of Malta

The renowned 'Marble Workers Darmanin' were Malta's leading marble craftsmen in the 19th century. They excelled in creating 'Monumental and Mosaic Slabs and other Decorative Artworks,' notably mosaic table tops primarily for export. Founded by Giuseppe Darmanin (later stylised as Joseph) around 1800, their work was cherished by British tourists like Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore, who visited Valletta during their Levantine Grand Tour in the 1830s.

Darmanin's impressive marble mosaic tables gained international acclaim through several international exhibitions from 1851 to 1886. Notably, a table currently exhibited at Buckingham Palace was presented at the Crystal Palace in 1851, where the Darmanins were awarded a prize medal.