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A CAST IRON TWO SEATER GARDEN BENCH

After the Victorian cast iron original by Coalbrookdale, c.1853

With a double pierced arcaded back above the wooden slatted seat and pierced supports,

DIMENSIONS: 94cm (37") High, 112cm (44") Wide

STOCK CODE: 91102

HISTORY

This is a replica piece . Perhaps the world's most famous iron foundry, Coalbrookdale was established in 1709 by a Quaker, Abraham Darby (1678-1717). His family were to maintain control of the works at Coalbrookdale, on the River Severn in Shropshire, for the next 150 years. Coalbrookdale continually broke new ground with its casting techniques, producing the first rails in 1769 and their famous and unprecedented bridge in 1799, seen as an historical benchmark for the "industrial revolution". The works expanded enormously throughout the nineteenth century and was to devote much of its energies to fine art castings to meet demand from the rapid rise of the "middle classes" with ornament for their gardens and conservatories. By 1855 Coalbrookdale, who had carried off the prestigious council medal at the Great Exhibition four years earlier, were producing two thousand tons of finished iron a week. The catalogue of 1875 was a staggering illustration of the firm's output, in terms of the quantity and variety of designs. Benches were perhaps their most successful line. Most antique benches by Coalbrookdale that come on to the market today, extracted from the rhododendrons, can be found in the 1875 catalogue as they remained in production for many years. There are also numerous copies of the benches as copywrite on designs in Victorian times only held good for three years and competing foundries quite openly copied them - as does LASSCO today. This bench, like many of Coalbrookdale's benches, was made in 3 seater and 2 seater and, in this case, one seater varieties. A reproduction of the two seater is offered by LASSCO as stock number 91102. Originals of this model bear the diamond registration mark for 28th April 1853 - the day the patent was registered. The strong Indian influence of this design is notable and often seen in the years after the Great Exhibition and at the height of the Empire (See Alistair Morris, "Antiques from the garden". pub. Garden Art Press, 1988, p176).

