

ANTIQUES

Limerick silver to shine at UK auction

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A PAIR of Limerick silver tablespoons dating back to 1785 is estimated to fetch up to £1,800 at auction in the UK next week.

The spoons by Maurice Fitzgerald, from a well-known family of silversmiths, are engraved with the Prince of Wales feathers motif, which is a particular feature of Limerick silver from the 18th Century. They will now go under the hammer at auction in Gloucestershire on January 26.

"Perhaps as few as ten pieces of Limerick silver come onto the open market every year and accordingly this pair of spoons is estimated to fetch between £1,200 to £1,800," a spokeswoman for Chorley's Auctioneers explained.

"Irish silver has always attracted collectors, both because it is scarcer than its English counterparts but also because it has its own unmistakable character. 18th Century Irish silversmiths produced silver with a distinctive whimsical feel to it; this was partly because they were geographically isolated from fashions elsewhere."

The collection to be offered later this month includes several pieces of Dublin silver, however it is predicted that "provincial pieces" from Limerick and Cork will attract the strongest bidding.

"The value of commodities is affected by availability and therefore it is provincial Irish silver that attracts the most attention."

