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The Arms of Broke

The armorial bearings as engraved upon this Suite of Four George III English Sterling Silver Meat Plates by William Stroud hallmarked London 1811 are those of the family of Broke. They may be blazoned as follows:

Arms: **Or a cross engrailed per pale gules and sable [at fess point is charged the baronet's augmentation]**

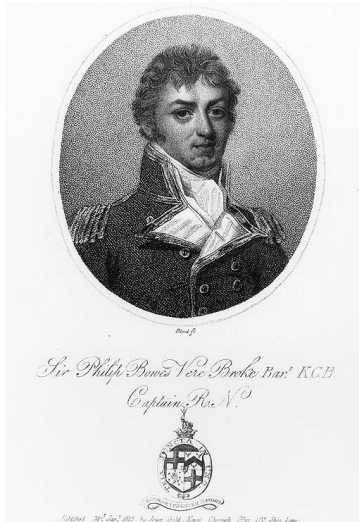
Crest: **A brock proper**

Crest of Augmentation: **Out of a naval crown or a dexter arm having a wreath of laurel proper and grasping a trident of the first¹**

From the evidence of the armorial bearings these dishes were undoubtedly in the possession of Rear Admiral Sir Philip Bowes Vere Broke, KCB, Royal Navy (born 9th September 1776 died 2nd January 1841), the 1st Baronet of Nacton in the County of Suffolk prior to his famed service during the War of 1812 against the United States of America upon the eastern seaboard of that country. Sir Philip was the eldest son of Philip Broke, of Broke Hall, Nacton, near Ipswich in the aforesaid county and his wife, Elizabeth Beaumont, the eldest daughter, and eventual heiress of The Reverend Charles Beaumont, of Witnessham in the County of Suffolk.

¹ This crest of augmentation was granted on the 1st March 1814. College of Arms Grant Books: Volume XXVIII, folio 13. Although not blazoned as such, the arms as seen in the illustration on p. 3, the arm is vested with the sleeve of a naval officer's uniform.

Given the date of hallmarking of these dishes the engraving on the rims of same was probably commissioned at the same time or shortly thereafter by the admiral and therefore there is a likelihood that they formed part of his plate aboard HMS Shannon when it set sail to North America later in 1811. As will be seen the helm is that of an esquire or gentleman rather than that of a baronet. Undoubtedly, when Sir Philip was created a baronet in 1813 for reasons of economy, he caused the baronet's augmentation to be engraved on the fess point of his arms and left the esquire or gentleman's helm as is rather polishing it out and engraving a baronet's helm anew.



After training at the Royal Naval Academy at Portsmouth Dockyard² from 1792 Sir Philip served aboard several ships³ see service in numerous actions eventually serving as third lieutenant on the frigate HMS Southampton during the Battle of Cape St. Vincent in February 1797. Two years later he was promoted to commander in 1799 and captain on 14 February 1801. After the action at Cape St. Vincent, he served on a further number of ships⁴ before taking command of HMS Shannon, a 36-gun frigate, on the 31st August 1806. Prior to the Shannon's voyage to North America, Philip and his crew aboard the Shannon were employed protecting whalers of Spitsbergen and cruising the Bay of Biscay and the western approaches to Channel, on occasion seeing a little action.

Thereafter being posted to Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1811. During next year on the 18th June 1812, war broke out between the United Kingdom and the United States of America, which is known as the War of 1812. In May 1813, the Shannon shadowed the American frigate USS Chesapeake, off Boston on the North American Station which culminated in the signal action on the 1st June for which Sir Philip is rightly famed for – the engaging and capturing of the Chesapeake. This success led to Sir Philip to be known during his lifetime as 'Broke of the Shannon'. During the brief action of some fifteen minutes, Sir Philip received a severe head wound from a cutlass blow whilst leading the boarding party on the Chesapeake. Although, he continued to serve in the navy, this put paid to further active service.



For his service in the War of 1812, the King created the admiral a baronet within the Baronetage of the United Kingdom, styled 'of Nacton in the County of Suffolk' on the 25th September 1813. Sir Philip was further appointed as a Knight Commander (within the Military Division) of The Honourable Order of the Bath on the 3rd January 1815. He also was awarded the Naval Gold Medal.

Although, the wound he received during the capture of Chesapeake precluded him from service at sea, Sir Philip continued to serve a naval gunnery specialist and he was promoted to his terminal rank as Rear Admiral of the Red on the 22nd July 1830.

² Which he entered in 1788.

³ Bulldog, Éclair, Romulus, and Britannia.

⁴ Amelia, Falcon, Shark, and Druid.

On 25 November 1802, Broke married Sarah Louisa Middleton, the second daughter of Sir William Fowle Middleton, the 1st Baronet of Crowfield in the County of Suffolk on the 25th November 1802. They had 11 children.

On his death, Sir Philip was interred in the family vault under the Broke Chapel within the Parish Church of St. Martin, Nacton aforesaid.



The Crest of Augmentation of Rear Admiral Sir Philip Bowes Vere Broke, Baronet, KCB.



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