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The Crest of the Family of Leeson, Earls of Milltown

The crest as engraved upon this Continental European Silver Mounted Coconut Cup and Cover by an unknown silversmith dating to *circa* 1800 is that of the family of Leeson, Earls of Milltown. It may be blazoned as follows:

Crest: **A demi-lion rampant gules holding between the paws a sun
or**

The crest is ensigned by an earl's coronet.

Given the presumed date of manufacture of this coconut cup and cover it was undoubtedly in the possession of either Joseph Leeson, the 2nd Earl of Milltown or his brother, Brice Leeson, who succeeded his brother as the 3rd Earl. Joseph Leeson (born 1730 died 27th November 1801) and his brother, Brice Leeson (born 20th December 1735 died 10th January 1807) were the sons of Joseph Leeson (born 11th March 1701 died 2nd October 1783), the 1st Earl of Milltown and his first wife, Cecilia Leigh (died 1738). Their great grandfather, Hugh Leeson of Culworth in the County of Northamptonshire came to Ireland as an officer in the Army and after his service settled there and made his way as a successful brewer as well as investing in property in Dublin. Joseph, the 2nd Earl never married although it is believed that he had long standing relationship with a lady named Peg Plunkett, a noted Dublin courtesan. As mentioned above, Joseph was succeeded as the 3rd Earl by his brother,

Brice. Brice Leeson married Maria Graydon (died 25th July 1772), the daughter of John Graydon, of Dublin and his wife Cassandra Tahourdin on the 25th October 1765. The father of Cassandra, Gabriel Tahourdin, of Wanstead in the County of Essex was a Huguenot refugee from Anjou who became a merchant of the City of London. During their marriage Brice and Cassandra had three sons. In consequence of their eldest son Joseph's death in 1800, Brice was succeeded in the Earldom of Milltown upon his death in 1807 by his infant grandson, Joseph (born 11th February 1799), the 4th Earl whose mother was Emily Douglas, the third daughter of Archibald Douglas.

The crest in my opinion is certainly contemporaneous with this coconut cup and cover.



Portrait of Joseph Leeson, the 2nd Earl of Milltown (1730 - 1801) by Pompeo Batoni.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Joseph Leeson". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined.

MSc, FSA Scot, Hon FHS, QG

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