

LANGFORDS

Antique & Contemporary Silver

Set 6 Victorian silver butterfly menu or place card holders

Mappin Brothers

Sold



REF: 2437

Height: 30 mm (1.18")

Width: 165 mm (6.5")

Depth: 120 mm (4.72")

Weight: 160 g

Description

Highly unusual set of antique sterling silver menu holders or place card holders, each beautifully modelled as a fern leaf with a butterfly resting on the leaf. The butterflies act as sprung clips to hold the menu or card in place and are cleverly engraved to give a three dimensional appearance.

As a fine and traditional addition to fine dining, it was the Victorians who first introduced menu holders to our dining tables. Silver menu holders and place card holders were first created to hold a card displaying the menu and, rather than putting a place card holder and name in front of each diner as we often do today, silver menu holders were spread and passed around the dining table. For that reason, we most frequently find sets of four silver menu holders, or pairs. Larger sets of six and eight can be found, while ten or a dozen silver menu or place card holders are fairly rare.

In the 19th century, silver menu holders often featured family crests plus more whimsical, nature-related themes such as this set, and after 1901 the practice flourished among well-to-do Edwardians. King Edward VII was a gourmand and liked to introduce a wide variety of unusual and exotic foods to his guests, many of which needed explanation. Marry this with his enthusiasm for shooting parties and the country pursuits of hunting and fishing, and we can see why so many antique silver menu and place card holders feature foxes, fish, game birds or other motifs on the same theme.