

LANGFORDS

Antique & Contemporary Silver

Antique Art Nouveau silver tea caddy

George Nathan & Ridley Hayes

Sold



REF: 7091

Height: 80 mm (3.15")

Width: 80 mm (3.15")

Depth: 80 mm (3.15")

Weight: 214 g

Description

An entirely handmade antique silver tea caddy of the Art Nouveau period. All four panels and the hinged cover are hand chased with stylised bellflowers and tendrils, classic motifs of the Art Nouveau ornamental style characterised by its use of a long, sinuous, organic lines.

Art Nouveau was an ornamental style of art that flourished between 1890 and 1910 throughout Europe and the United States. The distinguishing ornamental characteristics are its long undulating asymmetrical line, often taking the form of flower stalks and buds, vine tendrils, insect wings, and other delicate and sinuous natural objects.

Tea drinking in England became fashionable and hugely popular among the wealthy from the late 17th century. For most of the 18th century, import duties and the East India Company's monopoly on importing tea kept the price of tea artificially high making it a very expensive commodity. This in turn established the need for airtight, lockable tea canisters and chests, not only to preserve the tea's distinctive flavours, but to protect the precious contents. Commensurate with the high value of the contents, caddies became treasured and valuable accessories in their own right often made in fine porcelain or silver, and invariably fitted with a key.

By the end of the 18th century tea canisters and chests were referred to as tea caddies. The word caddy is thought to derive from the Malay word "kati" which was a measure of tea weighing about one imperial pound.