

LANGFORDS

Antique & Contemporary Silver

Aesthetic style provincial silver child's mug

Josiah Williams & Co

Sold



REF: 7167

Height: 83 mm (3.27")

Weight: 116 g

Description

Made in Exeter, this is a delightful antique Victorian silver child's cup, hand engraved in the Aesthetic style with birds, bamboo panels and foliage. There is a bead pattern mount around the base of the mug and the interior is gilded.

An ever-popular christening gift, children's silver mugs have been around for several centuries. A lidless drinking vessel with a handle, a silver child's mug was traditionally used for serving hot drinks. Silver was the preferred material because it kept the drink hot and did not taint its taste.

"Art for art's sake", was a phrase coined by Theophile Gautier in 1835, and became the slogan for the Aesthetic Movement - a movement that set forth to promote the cult of pure beauty in the arts - dream-like & wistful.

Aesthetic silver design focused on decorative surface detail where the shape of pieces was borrowed from an earlier stylistic era, but now covered in a riot of flowers, plants and birds, featuring decorative motifs from Japan; herons, blossom, bamboo, chrysanthemum and butterflies.

Small mugs were made specifically for children with some 18th century boarding schools listing a mug as a mandatory item that a boy should take to school.

Most early examples of children's mugs are of a plain baluster shape, designed for their sturdiness and practicality, and in the 1760s a barrel-shaped design appeared, often simply decorated with engraved hoops.

By the mid-19th century, ornate Victorian mugs emerged featuring exuberant floral and foliate decoration, elaborate engraving sometimes referencing nursery rhymes or traditional fables, and later the inclusion of gothic style cues too.