Edwardian sterling silver tea caddy with shell decoration

Thomas Bradbury & Sons

£895



REF: 9671

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Height: 79 mm (3.11")

Width: 80 mm (3.15")

Depth: 55 mm (2.17")

Weight: 224 g

Description

Antique sterling silver tea caddy box from the Edwardian era at the beginning of the 20th century. This rectangular caddy box features hand -chased shell motifs on the body and hinged cover, while the rims of the lid and base are decorated with a smart applied gadroon pattern border.

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, tea 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.

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