LANGFORDS
Antique & Contemporary Silver

Handmade Victorian sterling silver tea caddy

Joseph & Joseph Angell

Sold

Langfords
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REF: 1381

Height: 200 mm (7.87")

Depth: 155 mm (6.1")

Weight: 630 kg

Description

Beautiful, handmade antique silver tea caddy with flared panelled body featuring finely detailed, hand-engraving depicting scroll-work and tendrils of foliage. The panelled, stepped and hinged cover fits securely and is similarly hand engraved, reaching a peak surmounted with a tapering silver finial.

Inside there is a central partition forming compartments to separate China and Indian teas and the caddy is fitted with a lock and key.

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.

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