

LANGFORDS

Antique & Contemporary Silver

Silver model woodcock or snipe

Berthold Müller

Sold



REF: 2753

Height: 100 mm (3.94")

Weight: 185 g

Description

An Edwardian silver model of a woodcock or snipe with removable head and hinged wings. This model bears English import hallmarks for Chester 1907 and all parts - body, wings and head - are hallmarked denoting that they are all original.

In the late 19th century, the British government passed legislation to tax luxury goods from abroad; a move seen as a protectionist measure. Items such as silver model animals, birds, furniture miniatures and nefs (ships) were very popular at the time and being imported mostly from Holland and Germany, but for the purposes of taxation were considered without function and subject to this new tax.

To avoid these punitive import taxes, silversmiths produced model animals and birds whose heads could be removed, thus deeming them useful, functional containers. Similarly, model ships were designed so that the superstructure's top half could be removed and the wheeled hulls could be used as bowls. In this way silver articles were re-classified as practical objects, and therefore so escaped the luxury tax.