

LANGFORDS

Antique & Contemporary Silver

George III silver tea caddy

Charles Aldridge & Henry Green

£3,120



REF: 7851

Height: 125 mm (4.92")

Width: 104 mm (4.09")

Depth: 83 mm (3.27")

Weight: 422 g

Description

Classic late 18th century silver tea caddy of oblong form, and featuring delicately hand engraved bands and swags around the sides, and a flip cover surmounted by an oval, urn-shaped finial.

One side face of the caddy is engraved with a family crest and the opposite side an identifiable coat-of-arms with the latin motto *in hoc signo specimen* on the other.

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.