



The Story of British Tea Chests and Caddies

Social History and Decorative Techniques

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- An in-depth study of the relevance of tea, tea chests and caddies to British society
- Over 800 pictures of tea chests, caddies, canisters and other tea-related items
- Traces the exponential growth of tea's popularity from the mid-17th century to the 1900s
- Expertly researched and beautifully illustrated – the perfect reference work for historians, collectors and those working in the decorative arts

Tea was introduced to Britain in the 1650s. Its popularity burgeoned over the following two-and-a-half centuries, until it became a defining feature of British culture.

Drawing inspiration from China, British craftsmen worked to display their skills on numerous tea-related objects, which ritualised the process of drinking tea and imbued it with luxury status. Calling on an array of different materials and techniques, they developed a huge variety of canisters and lockable containers for storing and preserving this precious commodity.

Tea chests and caddies were not merely functional items that might lurk at the back of the kitchen – they were intended for display and were an essential accoutrement for fashionable women. As the habit of tea drinking filtered down the social scale, caddies were made in larger numbers and in more affordable forms.

This book brings together a great range of decorative antique tea containers, presenting them alongside detailed historical research conducted into their making and their place in British society across the centuries. It also explores the materials and techniques employed. With historical art showing tea's integration into British society, examples of old trade cards and original designs, and a wealth of illustrations of the objects themselves, this is a must-buy book for historians, collectors and those interested in the decorative arts.

The authors, including the General Editors **Anne Stevens**, **Kate Richenburg** and **Gillian Walking**, are all top experts in their fields, and many are drawn from museums, leading auction houses and academic institutions. The originator of this work was Anne Stevens who became the leading British authority on tea chests and caddies. Starting in the 1950s she carried out research on these items, building up a sizeable archive of findings, many taken from primary sources. She lectured on the subject in Britain and Australia and wrote various related articles.

Contributors to *The Story of British Tea Chests and Caddies* include Brian Austen, Rufus Bird, Julia Clarke, Richard Dey, Clive Edwards, Charles Hadjamach, Yvonne Jones, Sally Kevill-Davies, Richard Rose and Jeanne Sloane.