

Pair Victorian electroplate double salt cellars

Sold



REF: 3064

Height: 3 cm (1.2")

Width: 6 cm (2.4")

Depth: 4 cm (1.6")

Description

Extremely attractive and beautifully designed pair of Victorian electroplate double salt cellars. Circa 1850 by George Richmond Collis & Co. The bowls of the salt cellars are in the form of two open cowrie shells, joined at the centre. The inside of the shells is silver gilt which has gently worn at the base. The shells are mounted on branches of coral. Each shell is supported on the back of a dolphin, so that there are two dolphins lying tail to tail along the length of the oval base. The top of the base is wavy to simulate water and the base is supported on four feet in the form of sea snail shells. All is held firm by two bolts which pass from the bottom of the base through the dolphins and into the shells and each bolt is held tight by a screw. By loosening the bolt, the whole salt cellar can be dismantled so as to facilitate cleaning. On the side of the base of each salt cellar is stamped very clearly the makers mark and the companys date and alphabet system. The bottom of the base of one of the salt cellars is engraved with the number three, while the other one is engraved with the number two indicating that at least four of these salts were made together, if not six or twelve.

These salt cellars are very reminiscent of designs executed by Paul Storr for Rundell, Bridge and Rundell. George Richmond Collis & Co acquired models from Rundell, Bridge & Co at their dissolution sales in 1842 and 1843 and the company was renowned for executing extremely high quality copies of items made in former years in well known forms. There is a wealth of information regarding George Richmond Collis & Co in volume I of John Culmes Directory of Gold & Silversmiths Jewellers & Allied Traders 1838-1914. The company succeeded to the business of Sir Edward Thomason in Birmingham in 1835 and continued manufacturing in the same flamboyant and prolific style. They advertised themselves as Manufacturers of articles in the highest Classes of the arts and their popularity was due to their unfailingly high standard of production. The firm opened a branch in London in circa 1847. Mr. George Richmond Collis was Vice-Consul for France, Russia, Portugal, Turkey etc. These double salt cellars would be very useful on a dining room table to-day as one could put salt into one shell and pepper in the other. Furthermore, they are so decorative that they could stand on their own in the dining room or sitting room or the shells could be filled with chocolates, nuts or olives.