

**The Tea Ceremony**  
**Weekly Times Column**  
**By Warren Joel**

One of the largest areas of collecting is related to the English tea ceremony. For hundreds of years we have enjoyed the ritual of making and drinking tea. A tradition handed down from our English forebears.

The tea ceremony in Georgian times epitomized the English class system. Tea, being a valuable commodity, was locked away in the beautifully crafted timber, or in some cases, solid silver, tea caddy. The gentleman of the house would be presented with boiling water from down stairs and the tea caddy unlocked and the tea leaves retrieved. Made in the finest porcelain or silver tea pots and served in the finest bone china.

We have not necessarily changed the amount of tea we consume but we have dramatically changed the ritual. This is due to a range of factors, including: the introduction of the tea bag, the rise of women in society and the end of the class system. One might ask what all this means for the collectors.

That beautiful Georgian or Victorian tea caddy is still highly collectable as a decorative item. Even the lovely old sterling silver tea pot, cream and sugar containers will struggle to sell today as their usage has diminished.

Unfortunately with the passage of time the lovely old cups and saucers now end up as generally mismatched sets resulting in poor commercial value. For those tea connoisseurs out there rolling their eyes there is still a market for these tea related items but there is no doubt in the commercial world that sales are getting increasingly difficult. How many of you have tried to give the children the tea set, only to be told "don't want to clean it, don't want to use it, actually don't want it at all!"

*Next week: How could you sell teddy?*

**Free Valuation for Weekly Times readers.**

Byjoel will do a free valuation of your collectables via email. If you send a photo and description of your item to [valuations@byjoel.com.au](mailto:valuations@byjoel.com.au) I will access the item and respond.

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Warren is a third generation auctioneer and valuer specialising in Art, Antiques and Collectables, accredited by the Commonwealth in 2002 different areas of collectables.

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