A rare George IV York Minster Commemorative Table Snuff Box. English and made circa 1829.

£1,250



REF: 375761

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Description

The Snuff Box is circular in form and made from turned oak, with a pull off cover. The cover is inset with a medallion, the front depicting a detailed view of York Minster, above the title "York Minster" and the date 1829. The reverse displays the following script:YORKMINSTERWAS COMMENCED 1171COMPLETED 1377THE CHOIR OF THISMAGNIFICENT EDIFICEDESTROYED BYAN INCENDIARYFEBRUARY 2nd 1829.These boxes were made as mementos of the event to fund restoration and were made from the charred oak roof timbers.On February 1, 1829 Jonathan Martin hid behind a monument in the Minster, only emerging into the dark, empty cathedral at night. He piled cushions and prayer books together in the Choir, set fire to them, and left.The blaze was spotted in the early hours and the fire engines summoned. They had limited effect against an inferno which melted the lead from the roof and cracked the limestone pillars.Only late that afternoon did the fire begin to die out. By then about 230 feet of the choir roof had come crashing down, and the medieval choir stalls, the organ and the pulpit were destroyed.Martin, a former sailor from Northumberland, was a non-conformist who believed all prayer should come from the heart rather than recited from formal liturgy. He published pamphlets condemning the clergy as ‘vipers of Hell’.Although he left York after the fire he was soon caught. At his trial he was found not guilty due to insanity. He died in a London hospital in May 1838. Diameter: 4.25 inches, 10.63 cm.Height: 1.25 inches, 3.13 cm.

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