

# Basic Detail Report

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**00002690**

**Title**

Sacred to the memory of Viscount Lord Nelson

**Date**

1805

**Medium**

Textile: damask linen

**Dimensions**

Overall: 870 x 1110 mm

**Name**

Napkin

**History**

Centuries after his death at the Battle of Trafalgar on 21 October 1805, Nelson remains one of the greatest naval heroes of all time. Major celebrations were held in 1855 and 1905; and the most lavish in 2005. Souvenirs and commemorative pieces abound. The following newspaper report made special notice of this tablecloth when it was displayed for the 100th anniversary celebrations. From The Sydney Morning Herald, Saturday 21 October 1905: 'A FAMILY HEIRLOOM A unique relic of Lord Nelson's victory is a small tablecloth, or serviette, of finest Irish linen damask, the property of Mrs. Hey Sharpe (St. Paul's College), an heirloom which has been in her family for the last hundred years. The cloth is about a yard square, and was made and designed in commemoration of Lord Nelson's victories and death. The central design is enclosed in a laurel wreath, and contains a medallion of Nelson, surrounded by a figure of Britannia and the ship Victory on the left, and on the right is a male figure placing the colours at the feet of Britannia. Above is an urn, supported by a swan and a griffin, and surmounted by Cupids blowing trumpets and holding laurel wreaths, with the Union Jack on either side. Around the centre medallion are the words "Sacred to the memory of Viscount Lord Nelson," "Atrinidad," "Victory," "Trafalgar;" "21st Oct., 1805," is below. In each corner is a scene of a naval battle, with the name and a motto surrounding it, and in the centre of each side a medallion with a portrait of the Admirals of the fleet. There are three borders, one of oak leaves, one a design of anchors, flags, cannon, tridents, and oars, and the outer one is of small oak leaves. Considering its antiquity, the cloth is in a wonderful state of preservation, and is a monument to the industry and taste of the weavers.'