

50 Great Objects



A SPECIAL SELECTION OF ARTICLES FROM THE PUBLISHERS OF

ANTIQUES TRADE
gazette
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50 great objects, 50 great stories...

Antiques Trade Gazette presents a compendium of wonderful art and antiques that appeared in the newspaper during 2016-2017.



Noelle McElhatton
Editor, Antiques Trade Gazette

Welcome to this anthology of unique items, celebrating great art, provenance and craftsmanship.

In each issue of *Antiques Trade Gazette*, the newspaper's journalists identify what we consider to be the stand-out lot sold at auction that week, chosen for its rarity, back story and artistry. The 'Pick of the Week' is a slot highly coveted by auctioneers and stirs debate among our expert readers.

50 Great Objects is our choice of the best Picks of the Week from the 100 items featured in the paper across 2016 and 2017.

If the task of whittling 100 down to 50 wasn't onerous enough, then our idea of ranking them was mightily ambitious. Just how objective could we be about which objects were 'better' than others?

Picking order

To rank the objects we leaned heavily on our methodology for the weekly Pick of the Week slot.

Selling price is not the deciding factor. We love unusual and unique items with a great back story that teaches us something new about history.

If the object has a special provenance, was uncovered in unusual circumstances and consigned for interesting reasons, so much the better.

Across the year we attempt to represent all collecting categories, which is why Pick of the Week is not overrun by beautiful Asian vases each month.

Then and only then do we consider price and other factors (we tend to prefer antiques over modern items, for instance).

Raising the bar

So, when it came to choosing our favourite 50 from the past two years, we applied the same criteria but with an even higher bar. It was an enjoyable trip down (recent) memory lane – one we hope you, too, will enjoy.

Ask the experts

Our expert committee was a tight-knit group – three of our longest-serving writers perused the objects and debated every decision and every ranking. Thanks to Alex Capon, Anne Crane and Roland Arkell who between them have more than 70 years of experience working on *Antiques Trade Gazette*. Their knowledge and love of great objects permeate the choices in these pages.

As our experts made their decisions, they also recalled other newsworthy items that appeared in the *Gazette* but did not make Pick of the Week and thus could not be considered for *50 Great Objects*. We list a few them on the page opposite.

Try as we might to be objective, the final cut is subjective. So, whether your favourite was picked or not, we invite you to enjoy the splendid, surprising and special objects in our final selection and the stories behind them. Your feedback, as always, is welcome.

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In other news...

Only one object can be chosen as Pick of the Week in each issue of Antiques Trade Gazette (and thus qualify for consideration for 50 Great Objects). Below is a brief selection of other impressive items recently featured in our newspaper that demonstrates how challenging and fascinating our weekly decisions can be.



For more than 10 years after its donation, this **Suffragette banner** sat stowed away in a cupboard at a little charity shop in Leeds. On June 20 2017 it sold at local saleroom Gary Don for **£13,600** (plus 21% buyer's premium) to a UK collector/dealer.

An extraordinary example of British avant-garde clothing sold for **£29,000** (plus 20% buyer's premium) at Mallams Oxford on December 8 2017.

One of only two known, this **block-printed silk robe** was designed by Vorticist artist Percy Wyndham Lewis (1882-1957).



Cirencester auction house Moore Allen & Innocent offered this **George Stephenson miners' lamp** on June 16 2017 with a £100-150 estimate. On sale day it went to a private collector in Europe who secured it for **£15,000** (plus 20% buyer's premium).

This **boxed set of Fabergé cutlery**, given by Tsarina Alexandra to her goddaughter Alix Allen in Harrogate, sold for **£20,000** (plus 20% buyer's premium) at Bulstrodes, Christchurch, Dorset on March 2 2017. It came with an archive detailing the item's royal history.



The premium inclusive **£1,307,600** paid for this **Graff yellow diamond ring** at Fellows, Birmingham, on December 7 2017 was the first seven-figure bid at a regional UK saleroom since 2012. Yellow diamonds get their extraordinary fiery colour from the inclusion of nitrogen atoms during their creation.

This **£100 Lloyd's Patriotic Fund sword**, one of 23 awarded to captains who fought at Trafalgar, sold for **\$235,000 (£173,000)**, plus 15% buyer's premium, at James D Julia in Fairfield, Maine, on April 11 2017. It was presented to Captain William George Rutherford, the only US-born British captain in the battle.



At Dr Fischer in Heilbronn, Germany, this fine, late **17th century covered goblet** was purchased by a German collector for **€75,000 (£65,220)** plus 28% buyer's premium on March 18 2017. It is 15in (38cm) high and wheel-engraved with a boar hunting scene.

This **view of an auction at Drouot** in 1876 by Eugène Benjamin Fichel (1826-95) made **€80,000 (£72,730)** in a sale held by Beaussant Lefèvre (25% buyer's premium) on June 22 2017. The price paid for the signed and dated 2ft x 3ft (61 x 90cm) oil on canvas was a record for the artist.



Germanic Lithuanian ticks up to £26,000

This mid-17th century gilt brass horizontal striking table clock, signed with the initials JG and Wilna (for the Lithuanian capital Vilnius) made £26,000 (plus 24% buyer's premium) at Dreweatts & Bloomsbury in Donnington Priory on March 29 2016. It sold to a buyer in Poland at a sum well above the estimate of £6000-8000.

Despite the signature, the clock is distinctly Germanic in both its form and detail and it was believed that clocks such as this were either bought-in from makers based in southern Germany (mainly Augsburg or Nuremberg) or were made locally, closely copying German practice.

The steelwork to this 4½in (11.5cm) example was particularly fine and the single fusee striking movement had survived in original condition with the only significant alteration being the provision of a sprung balance to improve timekeeping.



Mid-17th century gilt brass horizontal table clock
£26,000

Dreweatts & Bloomsbury - 29 March 2016

The two sides of Alberto Giacometti

Cheffins (22.5% buyer's premium) sold a double-sided drawing by Alberto Giacometti (1901-66) for £130,000 on October 12 2017.

The head and figure sketches on two sides of the same 17 x 11in (44 x 28cm) sheet of buff-coloured wove paper came from the family of the late Kensington Church Street antiques dealer Eila Grahame.

Cheffins had sold the bulk of the Grahame collection in December last year.

Director at the Cambridge firm – and auctioneer last week – Martin Millard said: “We found these drawings buried under piles of dust-covered antiques, paintings and drawings. They are unrecorded and have never before been seen by the public.”

The pencil sketches are titled *Têtes* (recto) and *Nu debout* (verso) and signed Alberto Giacometti 1947 – placing them in the key decade of the artist’s career. It was in this period that he began to focus on single, elongated figures.

The auctioneers confirmed the authenticity of the sketches with the Comité Giacometti in Paris and the sheet is now registered in the Alberto Giacometti database under AGD 3759.

The estimate on the drawings was £40,000-60,000, attracting interest from phone bidders in Europe and the US.



Têtes (recto) and *Nu debout* (verso) in Giacometti’s signature style
£130,000

Cheffins - 12 October 2017

Ringing endorsement

Chakkar quoits may sound like equipment for a friendly game testing your throwing abilities but in reality they have much more intimidating associations.

These steel rings were Indian weapons with razor-sharp outer edges that were popular in the 18th century with Sikh warriors who would poise them on one finger, then send them flying through the air at their opponents. The quoits came in various diameters and could be worn on the wrist or carried in a turban.

For a 20th century equivalent, think, perhaps of Bond villain Oddjob with his razor-edged hat.

The three quoits featured in Sotheby's eclectic auction of aristocratically associated items, Of Royal and Noble Descent, held in Bond Street on January 19 2017.

They formed part of a 128-lot group from Coulston House, East Lothian, home of James Andrew Broun-Ramsay, Marquess of Dalhousie (1812-60).

Dalhousie was Governor General of India and garnered an impressive collection of Indian works of art. It is thought the quoits were either presented to him following the annexation of the Punjab, when the second Sikh war concluded in 1849, or were a war trophy. Sotheby's sold a large slice of Indian arms and armour from Coulston in 1990 but these were not among them, having been retained by the family.

The three quoits were of different diameters: the central example measuring 9in (23cm) while the smaller is 7¾in (19cm). Sotheby's specialist Thomas Williams thought the larger, heavier sharper-edged version was more likely 18th century and used as a weapon while the smaller, lighter ones probably dated to the 19th century when quoits became largely ceremonial objects.

He added that the case also had three pins in the centre, indicating the position of a fourth finely engraved ceremonial quoit which Dalhousie's family returned to the illustrious Guru Gobind Singh.

Estimated at £1500-2500, a figure Williams admitted was conservative, they attracted considerable interest from Sikh bidders, pushing the price to £26,000 (plus 25% premium). While such pieces are relatively rare on the market, he reckoned it was the provenance which was key here.

"They had this amazing connection to the Punjab and to Sikh history and I think that's what really resonated with our clients, particularly Sikh buyers.

"Sikh collectors are incredibly proud of their warrior heritage and this was a unique opportunity to buy something back that had unbroken provenance to the mid-19th century."



Chakkar quoits (steel throwing rings)
£26,000

Sotheby's - 19 January 2017

Doccia displays fatal attraction

The Doccia factory is perhaps best known for its hard-paste sculptures – many of them near-direct copies in porcelain of 17th and early 18th century bronzes. The key figure is the talented modeller Gaspero Bruschi, himself a Florentine sculptor.

A particularly rare figure of an executioner surfaced at Chiswick Auctions on July 25 2017.

This 10in (25cm) model, displayed on the end of a dusty mantelpiece in a house in west London, is thought to have come by descent from the family of Charles Marsh (1735-1812), a clerk in the War Office and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.

Its full history is unknown but it seems likely that it has descended through the same family since it was purchased c.1750. It has some condition issues including damage to both feet, although the base, typical of the plain dark pear wood used at Doccia in the 18th century, is likely to be original.

The model is one of many based on the work of the Florentine sculptor Massimiliano Soldani Benzi (1656-1740).

Factory founder the Marchese Carlo Ginori acquired a large number of casts from Soldani's estate, from which copies were made. Only two other versions of this precise model are thought to exist. One is in a private collection, and the other is in the Museo di Doccia.

However, the same figure was also adapted by the factory to represent Time on a clock case, while another variation, holding the severed head of St John the Baptist, is in the Wallace Collection.

Chiswick Auctions' specialist Jim Peake provided the cataloguing which helped it to sell at £17,000 (estimate £3000-4000).

After interest from three phone lines and a commission bid, it was hammered down to a well-known London collector-dealer in the room.



Doccia executioner figure
£17,000

Chiswick Auctions - 25 July 2017

Jewels fit for a cultured gent

This late 19th century necklace offered by Peter Wilson in Nantwich on September 13 2017 is a spectacular example of Grand Tour jewellery. Most Georgian or Victorian gentlemen keen to display an appreciation of classical art were satisfied to purchase just one or two hardstone intaglios as a souvenir.

This necklace comprises 27 amethyst, cornelian, agate, chalcedony and sardonyx intaglios, each set in yellow gold.

It was entered for sale in Cheshire earlier this year by a gentlemen from Staffordshire whose mother was an avid antiques collector. Keen to research its history further, auction room receptionist Helena Waudby made her own 'Grand Tour' to Oxford to seek the opinion of Dr Martin Henig of the Institute of Archaeology. He was quickly able to identify the intaglios as Roman (rather than Renaissance or later copies) with most dating from the 1st century AD.

Many of the carved subjects are birds and animals alongside other typical motifs such as a satyr, a charioteer and scenes from Greek mythology. Such a large cache of intaglios, originally from the finger rings worn and used as seals by every businessman in the Roman empire, would have represented a significant find at the time. It is probable they were unearthed en masse in a Roman drainage system or bath site.

The necklace had featured on the BBC's Antiques Roadshow some years ago when it was valued at around £15,000. It carried an estimate of £2000-2500 but generated huge interest from nine phone bidders, eventually selling at £28,000 (plus 24% premium) to a collector from Hong Kong.



The Grand Tour necklace
£28,000

Peter Wilson - 13 September 2017

How to make a Maltese cross: try to outbid him

The highlight of Chorley's two-day sale in Prinknash on September 19-20 2017 was this late 17th century Maltese marquetry commode.

The intricately inlaid 5ft 3in (1.59m) wide chest fashioned in orangewood, olivewood and walnut was once the property of William Parnis, an eminent lawyer from a Maltese family. His son Edgar (1857-1913) left significant bequests to the National Library of Malta and the Valletta Museum with this commode (originally one of a pair) inherited by his younger son Alfred (1860-1946) and passed by descent to the vendor.

The large size of these commodes, made for wealthy nobles and knights, may be explained as they could accommodate a Maltese lady's 'faldetta' (shawl or hooded cloak) without the need for folding. This example was on the market for the first time in over 150 years and pitched at £8000-10,000. A full bank of telephone bidders – many from Malta or originally from the island – contested it to £28,000.

The winning online bidder was a dealer from Malta who bought it for his personal collection. He deemed it among the best examples on the market in recent years in terms of both sophistication and condition.



A late 17th century Maltese marquetry commode
£28,000

Chorley's - 19-20 September 2017

Artist studio yields a special chess set

“When I first visited, the hairs on the back of my neck shot up. I knew immediately this was a unique capsule – a bohemian delight where a generation of artists had been inspired, had lived, loved and socialised.”

When in January this year Jonathan Benson of Reeman Dansie visited a converted block of Victorian artist studios in Chelsea to conduct a probate valuation he knew he “would never see the like again”.

The Stanley Studios, where artists such as Elizabeth Frink, Jack Smith and Rodrigo Moynihan once worked, had been home to artist and antique dealer Peter Gerald Collins (1923-2001).

In the 1960s, following success as a commercial artist, he and his wife Georgette (1921-2016) had opened the Balcombe Galleries in Sussex, a dealership that in its '60s heyday extended to 20 rooms and acres of outside effects. Alongside spiral staircases and garden statuary, Collins would exhibit his own work and hold exhibitions of others including Lucien Freud, Walter Sickert and Augustus John.

When in 1975 the Stanley Studios, where Collins had been a tenant since the 1950s, were threatened with demolition, the couple chose to save the building and convert it to a single dwelling.

The contents were offered in a single-owner sale in Colchester on May 9 2017. The 600 lots coupled a cross-section of country house furnishings such as a Howard & Son sofa with original lime-green ticking (sold at £4600) with moments from an artistic career that had rubbed shoulders with some major names in British painting and sculpture. In particular, the couple had followed the career of Dame Elisabeth Frink (1930-93) – once purchasing her plaster maquettes at a time when she couldn't afford to have them cast in bronze.

A series of Frink chess pieces (above), diminutive in size but assuming classic goggle head forms, proved particularly popular against modest hopes of around £1000 each. Each numbered 1 from an edition of 10, they sold for sums between £8000 for a bishop to £28,000 and £32,000 for a rook and a king respectively.



Five Elizabeth Frink chess pieces, each numbered 1/10.

From left to right:

£8000 (bishop)

£32,000 (king)

£8600 (pawn)

£11,000 (queen)

£28,000 (rook)

The king measures 4in (10cm) high.

Reeman Dansie - 9 May 2017

Yongzheng dish serves £230,000

Hansons Auctioneers in Etwell, Derbyshire sold a Yongzheng (1723-35) mark and period dish for £230,000 (plus premium) on September 29 2017.

The 13in (33cm) dish, decorated to both sides in the Ming style with white flowering blossoms borne on leafy branches, is similar to others in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and both the National Museum and the Guangdong Museum in China.

According to family history, it was acquired in 1911 by Alexander Robertson (1861-1922). Born in Thornhill, Scotland, he emigrated first to Canada and then the US, where, by 1906, he was vice president of the Continental and Commercial Bank of Chicago.

Though he married, he had no children and, on his death, all his possessions were shipped back to Edinburgh where they were divided between relations. The dish was being sold by three siblings from south Derbyshire who inherited it from their grandmother two years ago.

Valued by the BBC's Antiques Roadshow two decades ago at £20,000, the dish attracted 19 phone bidders at Hansons (the most ever taken by the auction house) with a £40,000-60,000 estimate. It was sold to a private overseas phone bidder.



The Yongzheng mark and period dish
£230,000

Hansons - 29 September 2017

Nelson's chair of command

The large pockets once inserted at the side of this leather armchair – now sealed up – give a clue to the role of the famous person who once sat on it. The chair's nickname of 'The Emma' is another big hint.

Those pockets are for holding dispatches, and the late 18th century chair was one given by Lady (Emma) Hamilton to her lover, Lord Nelson. It is believed to be Nelson's favourite armchair in his state cabin on board HMS Victory, his flagship at Trafalgar on October 21, 1815.

On October 18 2017, 202 years later, after a fierce bidding contest inevitably described by the auctioneers at Bonhams (25/20/12% buyer's premium) as a "Trafalgar-type battle", it sold for £85,000 against an estimate of £30,000-50,000.

The George III mahogany bergere with rectangular back, sides and seat upholstered in original leather, on square tapering legs and brass casters, was secured by a private UK buyer in the room.

In 1891 a catalogue entry for the Royal Naval Exhibition, Chelsea, said the chair was "lent by Thomas St Leger Blaauw Esq". A plaque at the front – based on the longer 1891 entry – says that after Nelson's death at Trafalgar it was "bought on board the Victory" by Admiral Sir Francis Laforey Bart, "he being at that time a Middy [midshipman] on board". In fact, Sir Francis was captain of the Spartiate at Trafalgar.

It was left by him "to his sister Mrs Molloy and given by her daughter-in-law, Mrs Molloy, to her brother W.H.Blaauw of Beechland".

The chair was sold in 1920 by 'J.Rochelle Thomas of King Street, St James's'.

An advertisement in the Connoisseur of January 1920 which offered the chair for £200 has a photograph showing that it already had the engraved brass plaque, and mentions that it had been in the Blaauw family until 1919 when it was purchased at the disposal of the contents of Beechland.

This armchair was sold at Christie's on October 23, 1980, to J&J May. It went to a private collector.



'The Emma' chair given to Nelson by Lady Hamilton
£85,000

Bonhams - 18 October 2017

Doulton figure is big sale catch

It is well-known that the market for Royal Doulton HN series figures is at something of a low ebb.

However, the exception to the general rule of bargain-basement prices comes from the small number of very rare figures that appeal to a core collecting base. Many end up in North America.

The figure offered at McTear's (20% buyer's premium) in Glasgow in August 24 2017 brought a bid of £6900 – the highest for the HN series in recent memory.

Fisherwoman, right, a large-scale figure also known as Waiting for the Boats, or Looking for the Boats, is thought to have been issued c.1917, four years after the release of the first figure from the series (Darling HN1).

Many of these early figures had a very short production run and were produced to order. They could even be decorated to match a chosen colour scheme.

Fisherwoman is known in a number of different colour variations. The central figure to this 12in (30cm) high model – a subject inspired by many Victorian oils of the same subject – wears a checked headscarf and polkadot shawl.

The signature of hugely influential factory art director Charles Noke appears to both the base and in the mould.

This figure came for sale from a vendor clearing the house of an aunt who had been a keen auction-goer. The estimate of £300-500 (set with little in the way of auction precedent to draw on) was swept aside by bidding from a range of international dealers and collectors.

Specialist Claire Douglas said the winning bid was made via thesaleroom.com by an online bidder in England.



Doulton Fisherwoman from the HN series
£6900

McTear's - 24 August 2017

Beast is soothed and price is best

Fieldings of Stourbridge set a new house record on September 2 2017 when Emanuele Caroni's (1826-76) marble sculpture of cupid taming the lion sold at £91,000 (plus 24% premium).

Signed and dated 1867, L'Amour Vainqueur de la Force was one of three sculptures shown by the Italian at the Exposition Universelle in 1867, alongside Esclave au Marche and Ophelie. Caroni was awarded a medal for these works under the category of 'Sculpteurs et graveurs en medailles du sur pierres fines etrangers'.

Auctioneer Will Farmer described it as "an internationally important piece of sculpture" and an "exciting find". He believed it was the first time this has been seen since it was first exhibited in 1867.

It was among the contents of Wordsley Manor, a Grade II-listed George II house built for Black Country industrialist John Holt which now sits in a one-and-a-half-acre plot in suburban Stourbridge.

Owned since the early 1850s by descendants of the Hodgetts glassmaking family, it was recently dubbed 'the cheapest manor house in Britain' when placed on the market for £350,000 by owner, retired architect Christopher Firmstone.

The statue is believed to have been acquired by the Firmstone family in the late 19th or early 20th century. Estimated at £20,000-30,000, it attracted 14 phone lines. The key contest was between an Italian buyer and the UK trade, with the latter emerging victorious.



The Caroni marble sculpture in situ at Wordsley Manor
£91,000

Fieldings - 2 September 2017

Vancouver sextant discovery

The name on the frame was the name of the game at Charles Miller's (24% buyer's premium) November 7 2017 auction in west London where a "rather tired and dirty" sextant sold for £28,000.

Marked for renowned London instrument maker Jesse Ramsden, c.1772, the 14½in radius Vernier sextant would have been a desirable object in itself, but another inscription proved crucial: G Vancouver.

On the day, three or four room bidders battled it out (no phones or commission bids were booked, curiously) and it went to the London trade.

This instrument, which had been estimated at £10,000-15,000 in the sale held at the 25 Blythe Road auction hub, was not only marked for George Vancouver but was probably used by him on Captain Cook's second (1772-75) and third (1776-79) voyages of discovery.

Not that the vendor had made the connection to the great Royal Navy surveyor whom the third largest city in Canada is named after.

He had bought it in 2005 from the estate of a retired RN officer in Devon among a job lot of various bits and pieces. It was only many years later that he noticed the inscriptions on a very dirty frame.

Miller said: "He realised it had a name on it but when he did find the name he didn't even know who Vancouver was."

Vancouver was just 14 when he set sail with Cook in 1772 and he was taught how to use instruments such as this sextant. He was certainly no shrinking violet, however. On his return three years later surviving correspondence shows he was writing to "London's most senior instrument maker and whinging about things", says Miller. He criticised the error of the arc and Ramsden took the sextant back to examine it personally.

"Ramsden would have been incandescent with some little whippersnapper telling him his instruments were not up to scratch," adds Miller. "But Vancouver was apparently that kind of character and could wind people up."



George Vancouver's sextant, made by Jesse Ramsden c.1772, with name inscription shown below
£28,000

Charles Miller - 7 November 2017

Back after 11 months locked in an icy prison

The appeal of this 5 x 7in (13 x 17cm) watercolour lies not in its technical skill but in its subject matter and the name of the amateur artist: the explorer Sir George Back (1796-1878).

Although it is neither dated nor inscribed, this hitherto unknown sketch shows Back's ship, the converted bomb vessel HMS Terror, stranded in the pack ice of the 'Frozen Strait' during the long Arctic winter of September 1836 to July 1837. The expedition had intended to map the last sections of the uncharted coast of North America.

The despair of a crew locked in an icy prison for 11 months was recalled by Captain Back himself when writing the second of two books, *Narrative of an Expedition in HMS Terror*, in 1838. "The time since we left England, though but eight months, seemed longer than three years of my former not unadventurous life. Days were weeks, weeks months, months almost years."

For Back, who had accompanied Franklin on three previous voyages, it was to be the final expedition beyond the Arctic Circle. When the ice finally thawed, the damaged Terror limped home, beaching when close to sinking on the shore of Lough Swilly in Ireland.

The watercolour appeared at the Bonhams Knightbridge Travel & Exploration sale on February 1 2017 estimated at £10,000-15,000, but sold at £38,000 (plus 25% premium).

In September 2011, the auctioneers offered a similar Back watercolour from the Frozen Strait exhibition showing the Terror and one of her boats off a spectacular iceberg in the Davis Strait, between Canada and Greenland. It sold for £30,000.



HMS Terror trapped in pack ice in Frozen Strait,
by Sir George Back (1796- 1878)
£38,000

Bonhams Knightsbridge - 1 February 2017

Riding the £23,000 Brompton omnibus

A highlight of Sworders' Country House sale in Stansted Mountfitchet on June 27 2017 was this rare tinplate London omnibus.

When it was made by the Rock & Graner factory in Göppingen in the 1860s this would have counted as a luxury toy and it remains so. Estimated at £600-800, it took £23,000 (plus 22% buyer's premium).

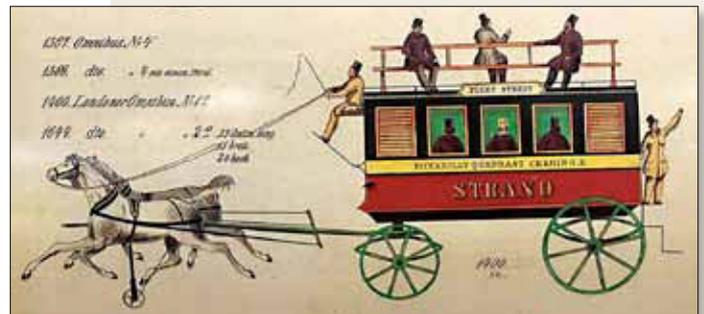
Rock & Graner (1813-1904), the premier toy maker of the period, made many different omnibuses for different world cities which were remarkably accurate depictions of the real thing. The 1875 catalogue shows a structurally identical London horse drawn omnibus with a different route and livery.

The destinations painted to the sides of Sworders' 16in (39cm) long toy include Brompton, Kew Gardens, Chelsea and Sloane Street.

A label to a period (but not original) card box provided a clue to its ownership history. It had been posted in 1901 – when the model was already more than 30 years old – by a French lady in Manchester to a Miss JB Wright in Biggleswade with the box inscribed Not to be opened. The local vendor had no idea it was valuable.

The horses, made in carved wood with gesso, had suffered over the years with detached and missing limbs. Several figures are also missing from the complete set and there are minor losses to the railings around the carriage.

However, it was deemed a remarkable survivor, with the original paint preserved beneath a thick layer of nicotine. The buyer, a London dealer/collector, said it will require minor "conservation rather than restoration".



Top image: a rare tinplate London omnibus by Rock & Graner £23,000

Middle: a similar London omnibus pictured in the Rock & Graner trade catalogue of 1875.

Bottom: a label to a period card box shows an early owner of the toy was a Miss JB Wright in Biggleswade.

Sworders - 27 June 2017

Medieval medal is a perfect buy for NY museum

This late medieval repoussé medal depicting The Emperor Heraclius's Return of the True Cross to Jerusalem proved the highlight of the Sir Timothy Clifford collection of Renaissance and Baroque medals sold by Morton & Eden in London. Estimated at up to £10,000, it was bought by The Cloisters Museum in New York for £18,000 (plus 20% buyer's premium) on June 13 2016.

The history, authorship and iconography of these medals is complex. However, they are thought to copy one of the two large gold medals of Constantine and Heraclius recorded in the inventory of the important early collector Jean Duc de Berry (1340-1416).

As reported in last week's issue (ATG 2247), two of the marble mourners from de Berry's tomb were pre-empted by the Louvre following their sale at Christie's in Paris on June 15.

Pieces from the duc's collections were made available to French artists. This image of the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius (610-641) in a covered triumphal chariot drawn by three horses became the inspiration for one of the illuminations in the *Belles Heures*, the celebrated Book of Hours commissioned by the duc around 1409.

As it is now in the medieval art collections of The Cloisters Museum, part of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the medal represented a perfect acquisition.

The original gold Heraclius medal was stolen from the royal collections and melted down in 1831. The silver version, bought by Sir Timothy – former director of the Scottish National Gallery – in Paris in the early 1970s, is one of only two known repoussé versions, the others being solid casts.



Three views of the 'School of Paris' repoussé silver medal depicting The Emperor Heraclius's Return of the True Cross to Jerusalem
£18,000

Morton & Eden - 13 June 2016

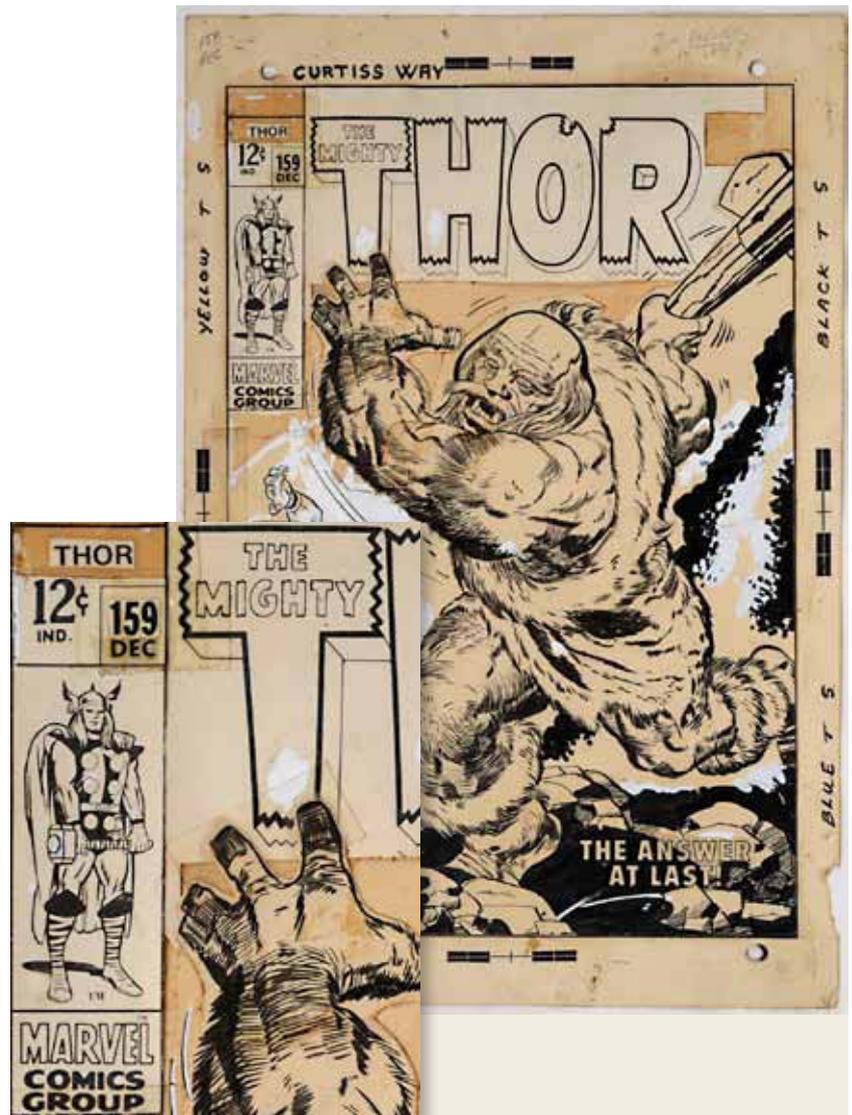
Thor hammered down at a mighty £36,000

THE original artwork for the cover of The Mighty Thor, published by Marvel Comics in 1968, sold for £36,000 (plus 20% buyer's premium) at Charterhouse in Sherborne, Dorset, on June 24 2016.

The 17 x 11½in (44 x 29cm) ink and white paint 'paste-up' was created by Jack Kirby (1917-94) and Vince Colletta (1923-91) – both legendary names in comic book art. Prolific artist, writer and editor Kirby is widely regarded as one of the medium's major innovators who co-created many of Marvel's major characters, including the Fantastic Four, the X-Men and the Hulk.

As an inker for Marvel in the 1960s, Colletta worked on nearly every title including Kirby's creation The Mighty Thor across its six-year run from 1962.

This rare survivor from the so-called Silver Age of comic books (published in issue 159, December 1968) had hung in the vendor's bedroom from the early 1970s. Her father was a creative designer who worked on advertising campaigns such as Old Spice and Castrol engine oil, and it is assumed he acquired it from a colleague or associate at this time. Although creased and stained in parts, it was in good condition with all elements of the 'paste-up' having been preserved under glass. The estimate was £5000-8000.



Original artwork for the cover of The Mighty Thor comic
£36,000

Charterhouse - 24 June 2016

East meets West for a £55,000 fish sausage

This Japanese lacquer coffer from the Momoyama or early Edo period (1590-1625) was sold by Charterhouse of Sherborne on February 17 2017 for £55,000 (plus 20% buyer's premium).

Estimated at £5000-10,000, it was offered for sale on behalf of a London-based client who had kept it in storage in Reading. It was bought by a London dealer.

Europeans admired lacquer for its hardness and lustre, which had no equivalent in western decorative arts. From the late 16th century, when Europeans began to arrive in Japan for trade and Christian missions, Japanese craftsmen developed a style of lacquer especially for export.

In a style known as namban or 'southern barbarian', these combined European forms and a hybrid style of gold hiramaki-e and abalone shell decoration and elaborate gilt copper mounts were considered appropriate for Westerners.

That these differed from indigenous furniture is apparent in the terminology employed by the Japanese to describe them.

Famously, domed coffers were known locally as kanabokogata or 'boxes in fish-sausage shape'.

This example, measuring 3ft 1in wide x 18in high (95 x 47cm), was in good condition, showing only minor damage and losses to the mother-of-pearl.

The scenes to the exterior included typical vignettes of figures, dwellings, animals and foliage with the underside of the domed top decorated with a pair of birds in flight and fruiting vines.



Late 16th or early 17th century namban lacquer coffer
£55,000

Charter House of Sherborne - 17 February 2017

Nicholson looks good in yellow

A William Nicholson (1872-1949) portrait drew admirers at Thomas R Callan (17.5% buyer's premium) on November 19 2017 as it was hammered down for £150,000.

The framed oil on canvas, *The Yellow Jersey*, shows a young woman, thought to be Nicholson's only daughter, Annie Mary 'Nancy' (1899-1978), in an ostrich plume hat. It was included in Callan's Fine Traditional and Contemporary Art Sale, at the Trump Turnberry Hotel in Ayrshire.

Signed and dated 1913, this oil had been exhibited at Nicholson's second show in the Goupil Galleries, London, in 1918 and again in Liverpool in 1927. Bearing labels for both, it came for sale from a deceased estate in Scotland.

Estimated at £12,000-18,000, the picture was catalogued 'in very good condition' with only minor cracking around the left side of the face and the right hand side of the head.

Ten potential buyers – eight from the London trade – arranged phone bids. Amid competition in the room, online and on the phone, two determined bidders fought it out until the painting was knocked down to a member of the London trade.

It is a strong result for a Nicholson, whose highest price at auction, according to the Art Sales Index, stands at the premium-inclusive £265,250 bid at Christie's in 2011 for a still-life.

The same source lists his *Young Woman in White* as his highest-selling portrait to date. It went for the same price, £150,000, at Sotheby's London in 1998.

Nancy Nicholson – who married the poet Robert Graves in 1918 – was also an artist and fabric designer.



**The Yellow Jersey by William Nicholson
£150,000**

Thomas R Callan - 19 November 2017

NZ's first female photographer

Originally from Lymm in Cheshire, Elizabeth Pulman (née Chadd) (1836-1900) is regarded as the first professional female photographer in New Zealand. Emigrating from Gravesend in 1861, she and her husband George (a joiner and draftsman by trade) opened a photography studio in Short Street, Auckland, in 1867, specialising in portraiture and scenic views of the 'new' country for wealthy settlers or the tourist trade.

Although Elizabeth was widowed twice with nine children, she continued to run the Pulman Photographic Studio until its sale shortly before she died. Her most enduring work was a series of portraits of Maori men, women and children – including the tattooed (moko) faces of many important chiefs of the North Island – sold as albumen prints, their evocative titles set in the image. Most examples are held in public collections.

Two New Zealand news crews were in Whitchurch, Shropshire, on February 20 2016 to record the sale of 13 Pulman albumen prints unearthed by auctioneers Trevanion & Dean. The photographs, consigned by a Telford vendor who had kept them in a drawer for 30 years, included some of the best-known Maori prints, preserved in generally good condition.

Estimated at between £200-500 each, bidding for the group – doubtless aided by the blessing of the Maori Society of London who travelled to Shropshire to pray around the photographs before they were sold – reached close to £18,000. Four of the 11 x 8in (28cm x 21cm) images will return to New Zealand, with two secured by a descendent of Elizabeth Pulman.

Prices ranged from **£850** for Pineaha Warekoha to **£2000** for the striking image titled Tita Wirum Te Wahanuis Sisters and numbered 75.



Top: Anehana
£1400

Bottom: Tita Wirum Te Wahanuis Sisters
£2000

Trevanion & Dean - 20 February 2016

Lofft gives a painting lift

This 17th century Indian painting attributed to one of the best artists of the Mughal court sold for £42,000 at Sworders' December 5 2017 Country House Sale.

The 10 x 6in (24 x 14cm) body colour miniature heightened in gold was recently discovered in a private collection in Suffolk where it had been for more than one and a half centuries.

A letter dated July 18, 1846, written in the flowing hand of Robert Emlyn Lofft (1782-1847) of Troston Hall near Bury St Edmunds, is pasted to the back of the frame.

In it Lofft, a British Indian Army officer and collector of Arabic and Persian manuscripts, writes: I have the pleasure to send you a copy of a note from [Horace Hayman Wilson] the Librarian at the East India House to whom I sent a copy of the inscription on the picture I saw at your house. The inscription on your picture signifies The Portrait of Shahjehan in the time of his youth, the work (or painting) of the painter Goverdhan.

The artist is considered one of the leading Mughal royal painters of the first half of the 17th century, with this picture dated on stylistic ground to the 1630s. A number of comparable works are known including three in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.

Titled A Mughal prince with his consort or Shah Jahan in the Time of Youth, the identity of the sitters is unclear. Based on the inscription, Lofft believed the scene of a prince seated with his consort in a palace chamber to represent the betrothal of the youthful Shah Jahan to Mumtaz Mahal c.1607-8.

It is conceivable that this painting was, like the Taj Mahal mausoleum, a retrospective celebration of their loving union.

However, an alternative theory is that the prince is Dara Shikoh, Shah Jahan's favourite son who, born in 1615, would have been aged 15 or thereabouts when this picture was painted. It attracted plenty of interest against a £10,000-15,000 estimate, with the winning bid placed from Hong Kong.



17th century Indian painting sold at Sworders
£42,000

Sworders - 5 December 2017

Arnold's near perfect timing

Sotheby's established an auction record for a watch by John Arnold (1736-99) on July 7 2016 when the large silver pocket chronometer of 1781 sold at £460,000 (plus 25/20/12% buyer's premium), close to three times the estimate of £130,000-150,000. It was the highlight of the second part of a private collection that the auctioneers have titled *Celebration of the English Watch: John Harrison's Enduring Discovery*.

Between 1770-90, Arnold pioneered a series of trailblazing watchmaking inventions. This movement, signed John Arnold, London, Inv. et Fecit London, includes the 'double S' balance introduced by Arnold in 1780, considered amongst the most elegant compensated balances ever made. The shaped 'S' sections are bi-metallic and designed to overcome the changing elasticity of the balance spring and expansion of the balance's rim in different atmospheric conditions.

Numbered 23/78, this is the only watch of its kind that survives complete with its original 7cm silver consular case (hallmarked for John Terrill Pain, London 1781), white enamel dial and the gilded full plate movement wholly intact. Two other similar Arnold watches from this period are known (number 1/36 and 2/43) carrying a similar 'double T' balance.

The particular watch, like many in the catalogue, is illustrated in *The English Watch, 1585-1970* by Terrence Camerer Cuss who acquired it from a private collection in 1947.



John Arnold (1736-99), large silver pocket chronometer
£460,000

Sotheby's - 7 July 2016

A window into Zettler prices

The Zettler Glass Manufactory was founded in Munich in 1870 by Francis Xavier Zettler (1841-1916) and his father-in-law Joseph Gabriel Mayer (1808-83) – two men who combined a deep religious conviction with a love of medieval culture.

Branches opened first in London and Paris and then a studio in New York, where the so-called Munich style proved particularly popular. A selection of Zettler panels formed a travelling promotional exhibition that toured North America in the early 20th century, securing orders for more than 50 cathedral churches in the US and Canada.

Two years before the studios closed in 1934, the collection had taken up residence with other smaller-scale works at the Higgins Armory Museum, founded in Worcester, Massachusetts, by local industrialist John Woodman Higgins (1874-1961).

The museum closed due to lack of funding in 2013. West London arms and armour specialist Thomas Del Mar conducted a series of sales to disperse elements of the collection not absorbed by the Worcester Art Museum.

Despite the size of the Zettler operation – by the turn of the century it employed some 600 artisans and glass painters – relatively little appears for sale. In fact, the last tranche of Zettler works at auction was the eight modestly sized panels sold by Del Mar as part of the second Higgins sale in May 2014. They took prices from £800-3200.

The 34 panels and border decorations offered on June 28 2017 included spectacular pieces, many of them direct copies of windows from the medieval buildings Zettler studied during extended trips to England, France and Italy. They met multi-estimate bidding. Leading proceedings at £26,000 (estimate £4000-6000), plus 24% buyer's premium, was the 8ft x 7ft 7in (2.44 x 2.23m) copy of the Death and Burial of the Virgin window made c.1260 for the south side of the nave aisle in Chartres Cathedral, with funds donated by the Shoemakers Guild.

In an iron and wood display frame signed FX Zettler, it sold to the institution that purchased the majority of Zettler lots in the sale. Del Mar said the buyer is planning to include its purchases in a future exhibition.



Top: Zettler glass panel, Death and Burial of the Virgin
£26,000

Above: Among the smaller Zettler panels on offer at 15 x 14in (39 x 37cm) was this example depicting King Clotar weighing his gold armour made by St Eloi (Eligius) after the original in the Louvre
£4800

Thomas Del Mar - 28 June 2017

Carved in Russia and mounted in Scotland

This George III coconut cup with silver strapwork mounts (right) sold by Lyon & Turnbull of Edinburgh on August 17 2016 provides a glimpse of the close relationship that existed between Scotland and Russia in the late 18th century.

Standing 7½in (18.5cm) high, it is finely carved with portrait busts of Catherine the Great, Empress Elizabeth and Tsarevich Peter, each surrounded by a display of arms and trophies of war. Given the subject and quality of execution, it was probably carved in Russia and later made its way to Scotland where Edinburgh silversmith Alexander Gairdner was commissioned to make the mounts (hallmarked 1791) and line the bowl in silver gilt. Trading routes to the Baltic contributed to the success of Scottish merchants and encouraged many Scots (such as Dr John Roger, the Dumfriesshire-born physician to Catherine the Great) to seek their fortune in the Russian court.

Gairdner would become one of Edinburgh's longest-serving goldsmiths, working from 1754 (after his apprenticeship to William Aytoun) until his death in 1803, a career of some 49 years. He was one of a very small handful of Scottish goldsmiths who received royal patronage. When on April 8, 1795, the Prince of Wales married Princess Caroline of Brunswick, The Caledonian Mercury noted that 'Mr. Gairdner, Jeweller to his Royal Highness for Scotland, had a beautiful representation of the Prince's feathers in small lamps on the front of his shop, which had a very fine effect, and attracted much notice'.

The coconut cup, described as 'the property of a lady' and estimated at £1500-2500, generated one of the strongest bidding battles of L&T's Scottish silver sale when it sold at £8000 (plus 25% buyer's premium).



**Russo-Scottish silver-mounted coconut cup
£8000**

Details of the Edinburgh marks and the carved decoration of Catherine the Great appear above and below.

Lyon & Turnbull - 17 August 2016

Man in possession of good fortune required

First editions of Jane Austen's most popular book, *Pride and Prejudice* of 1813, in contemporary bindings don't come along often. But one such prize – a copy with a rather distant but nonetheless attractive family link – appeared at Mellors & Kirk (20% buyer's premium) in Nottingham on March 22-23 2017.

This three-volume copy, in now slightly rubbed half calf and marbled boards of the period, bore at the head of the title-page the ownership signature of the Reverend Edward Graves Meyrick of Ramsbury in Wiltshire.

Meyrick was a teacher at the school where Jane's favourite nephew and her first biographer, James Edward Austen-Lee, had been sent as a boarder at the age of 13 – just a couple of years before Jane's book was published.

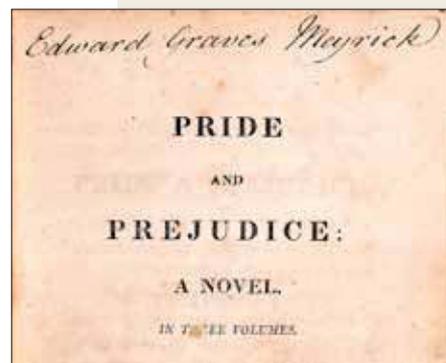
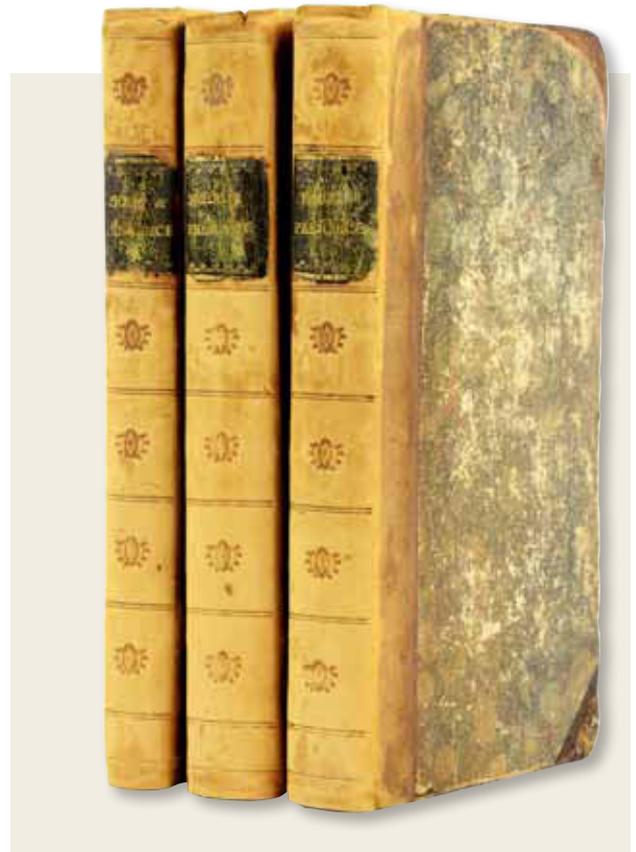
Meyrick's ownership signature has been scored through in the second and third volumes, perhaps by a later owner, but in the year that marks the 200th anniversary of Jane's death – and against a modest estimate of just £2000-3000 – this attractive copy was bid to £38,000.

It was one of a group of Austen firsts from the estate of a deceased collector who is thought to have acquired them in the late 1950s or early '60s.

His copy of *Sense and Sensibility*, Austen's first published work, was sold many years ago, it seems, but the Nottingham sale did include *Emma* of 1816, in a period style but much later and smarter half calf binding and lacking the half titles, at £7500.

A somewhat spotted example of the four-volume edition of 1818 that brought together *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* sold at £4200. It sported contemporary calf bindings but lacked the lower part of the spine of the first volume and parts of some of the spine labels.

Auctioneer Nigel Kirk says the collector's family have since sent him a copy of *Mansfield Park*, which will come up for sale in June.



The period bindings and signed title-page of the three-decker, 1813 first of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*
£38,000

Mellors & Kirk - 22-23 March 2017

Ottoman beads beat 'Bakelite' pitch but no Turkish bid delight

The presence of two Turkish gentlemen at the **Objects of Desire** sale at **Sworders in Stansted Mountfitchet on October 18 2017** had raised a few eyebrows – if only because they appeared singularly disinterested in the contents of this 'handbags and gladrags' sale.

However, this changed with the appearance, towards the very end of the sale, of a lot catalogued simply as "a single row uniform Bakelite bead sautoir, with oxblood, olive-shaped beads".

Bidding had been expected in the £80-100 range.

Instead, with a huge commission bid left on the book competing with countless internet participants, the auctioneers were able to start the contest at £1100. The two gentlemen in the room failed to make an impression as a bidder on thesaleroom.com won out at £18,100 (plus premium).

These Ottoman beads are indeed a form of synthetic resin: faturan.

The bead carvers in Istanbul – makers of the garlands of beads known as tesbih and komboloi – were swift to appreciate the potential of Bakelite c.1910. They made their own, mixing it with dyes, powdered amber and other additives to achieve the desired result. Secret recipes were jealously guarded.

This particular string, with its perfectly uniform cherry amber beads, carved centrepiece (or imame) and silk tassel with gold wire, has many of the stylistic hallmarks of the Ottoman master Ulvi Iskender.



Cherry amber faturan tesbih with stylistic hallmarks of Ulvi Iskender
£18,100

Sworders - 18 October 2017

Two faces of the 17th century

Market-fresh self-portraits by two giants of 17th century British art appeared for sale at different salerooms on July 6 2016. Both sold to UK private collectors.

An early self-portrait by William Dobson (1611-46) was the highlight of Bonhams' Old Masters sale in New Bond Street. Based in London, Dobson painted himself in a black tunic and white collar sometime during the 1630s, his introspective and troubled gaze reflecting a tumultuous period in English history.

He would later join Charles I's court in Oxford during the civil war where he would replace the deceased Anthony Van Dyck as the king's official painter and establish his reputation as the most distinguished native-born British artist before William Hogarth.

By 1791, the 2ft x 18in (62 x 47cm) portrait hung at Howsham Hall in Whitby. It remained there until it was bought by the vendor's grandfather at the contents sale of Howsham in 1948. It formed part of the 1962 Arts Council exhibition, British Self Portraits, and the NPG show William Dobson 1611-1646: The Royalists at War, in 1983-84.

Estimated at £200,000-300,000, it sold for £920,000 (plus 25/20/12% buyer's premium) – surpassing the artist's previous high of £362,500 (including premium) at Sotheby's in 2013 for Portrait of James Graham, 1st Marquess of Montrose.

Sotheby's evening Old Master sale on the same day offered three chalk portrait drawings by Sir Peter Lely (1618-80). These included a self-portrait made in the late 1650s, one of only two known by the artist and drawn by Lely in his mid-30s. Kept in the family home in Covent Garden, it had remained with the artist's direct descendants for over three and a half centuries. Self-Portrait, in black and coloured chalks heightened with white, sold at £720,000 against an estimate of £600,000-800,000.



An early self-portrait by William Dobson (1611-46)
£920,000

Bonhams - 6 July 2016



A self portrait chalk drawing by Sir Peter Lely (1618-80)
£720,000

Sotheby's - 6 July 2016

Archive of Great War nurse brings £11,200

An archive telling the poignant story of one of the 300 nurses who lost their lives during the First World War sold for £11,200 at Hansons (17.5% buyer's premium) of Etwall on August 22 2016.

The collection sold by the great niece of Katy Beaufoy (1868-1918) is one of the most comprehensive of its type ever found. Six phone bidders and one internet bidder took the hammer price well above the £4000-6000 estimate before it sold to a female private collector from the UK.

The relatively small number of female casualties in the Great War dictates that items belonging to women rarely come onto the market.

The archive featured a handwritten diary, personal photographs and all Beaufoy's medals, including a South Africa medal, British War and Victory medal and 1914-15 Star, her death plaque and dedication scroll.

Beaufoy, born in Aston, Birmingham, first volunteered for service in the Boer War in the late 1890s. In 1915 she was posted to serve on board the hospital ship *Ionian* during the Gallipoli campaign. She witnessed horrific injuries and on December 18, 1915, wrote that she "felt almost demented with tiredness, so much to do".

On returning to work as matron on the hospital ship *Glenart Castle* in September 1917, she was lost, presumed drowned, in February 1918, when the vessel was torpedoed by German submarine U56 in the Bristol Channel.



Katy Beaufoy (1868-1918), pictured top, was one of the 300 female nurses who lost their lives during the First World War. Her death plaque, above, was part of the archive
£11,200

Hansons - 22 August 2016

What the Russian prince wore to the ball...

Like many Russian aristocrats born in the later years of the 19th century, Prince Felix Youssoupov (1887-1967) lived an extraordinary life both before and after the revolution.

From one of the wealthiest families, he spent some of his early youth in Britain attending University College, Oxford, before returning to St Petersburg to marry Princess Irina, niece of Tsar Nicholas II. Back in Russia he was famously involved in the assassination of Rasputin and, come the revolution, he and Irina escaped via the Crimea to live in exile in France.

Irina survived her husband by three years and after her death many of their possessions passed into the ownership of their friend, the Mexican sculptor Victor Contreras. On November 4 2016 at Drouot in Paris the auctioneers Coutau Bégarie offered a group of items from Contreras' collection, plus Youssoupov memorabilia including photographs and correspondence, from their descendants.

One of the highest prices in the 390-lot auction was provided by the splendid 18th century brocade costume pictured right. Youssoupov had worn it to the Eglinton Ball on July 11, 1912, when still a student. The ball, held at the Albert Hall, was a successor to the Eglinton Tournament, a romantic revival of medieval jousting and banqueting organised by the Earl of Eglinton at his eponymous castle in Scotland in 1839.

The young prince entered fully into the spirit of the event. The costume is that of a boyar or mediaeval aristocrat, studded mother-of-pearl and trimmed with sable. "The next day my photo was in all the papers," recalled the prince. At the Coutau Bégarie sale the costume lacked the hat and the sable trim but came with a pair of embroidered leather boots. It sold for €62,000 (£56,365) plus 22% buyer's premium.



The costume worn by Prince Felix Youssoupov at the Eglinton Ball in 1912
€62,000 (£56,365)

A famous photograph of the Russian aristocrat appeared in the papers the day after the ball.

Coutau Bégarie, Drouot Paris - 4 November 2016

Devil is in the detail for Tasmanian table

Shortly after the catalogue for Bellmans' September 3-5 2017 sale in Wisborough Green, Sussex had gone to press, a printed paper label was noticed to the underside of this burr-veneered occasional table. It read L Pearson, Cabinet Maker & Upholsterer, 3 Elizabeth Street, Hobart Town.

This was something altogether rarer and more desirable than a £300-500 George IV occasional table.

It was re-catalogued, a zero added to the estimate and Australian and Tasmanian museums were contacted.

After a lengthy tussle between a raft of Australian bidders on the phones and the internet on September 5, it sold for £8300 (plus 22% buyer's premium).

The table was part of a considerable furniture-making industry which developed in Van Diemen's Land across the 19th century to exploit the local timber resources (the abundant huon pine), as well as the Australian red cedar imported from New South Wales. Most pieces followed British pattern books. Examples of labelled Tasmanian furniture are rare.

Auction records show a handful of pieces by WJ Lloyd and T Whiteside & Son (both of Hobart), while the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery owns several pieces by Irish émigré William Hamilton (c.1796-1885), who arrived in Hobart as a free settler in 1832.

Little is known about L Pearson, although the auction house could offer two promising leads for research.

It is probable this table was made by a relative of either John Pearson, a cabinetmaker from Liverpool who (according to The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, dated November 16, 1833) arrived in Hobart Town on the ship Lady East, or T Pearson, an Elizabeth Street cabinetmaker who added his name to a petition penned by Hobart inhabitants in 1854.



The 19th century Hobart table
£8300

Bellmans - 2 September 2017

A profiteer of the South Sea Bubble

This remarkable 'English School' satirical oil is recorded in contemporary prints titled *Lucifer's New Row-Barge*, a version of which is in the British Museum.

It depicts Robert Knight (1675-1744), the cashier of the South Sea Company who in 1719 successfully negotiated with the government of the day to incorporate all the national debt into the South Sea Company. Knight greatly profited personally from this process – and the many bribes to MPs and peers he recorded in a famous green book – and bought an estate in Essex for £20,000.

When in 1721 the bubble burst, Knight escaped to Calais together with his evidence of bribery. Although captured and incarcerated in Antwerp, he was later released as neither government wished to have his incriminating evidence exposed. His estates in England were confiscated and sold for £261,077 but he still had sufficient funds to set up in Rue St-Honoré in Paris as well as an estate near Vincennes. He returned to Essex in 1743.

Painted in 1722, *Lucifer's New Row-Barge* shows Knight aboard a regal ship populated by devils and filthy lucre. The numerous annotations in white include lines such as *Except None, Cheat All, Show No Remorse of Conscience* and *My Hearts Zealous for my Countries Ruin [sic]*.

Measuring 2ft 4in x 2ft 1in (72 x 62cm), it was offered at Woolley & Wallis of Salisbury on January 11 2017, among the 63 lots belonging to theatrical impresario Sir Michael Codron (b.1930). The diverse collection, formerly furnishing his London flat, has been collected over 50 years.

Estimated at £3000-5000, the well-preserved painting was hammered down at £24,000 (plus 22% buyer's premium) to Sutton Coldfield dealership Thomas Coulborn & Sons, buying for stock.

The January sale of furniture, clocks and works of art – a traditional curtain-raiser for the new year auction season – posted a hammer total of £475,000 with a selling rate of 84% across just under 700 lots.



Lucifer's New Row-Barge, a satirical portrait of Robert Knight (1675-1744), the cashier of the South Sea Company c.1722
£24,000

Woolley & Wallis - 11 January 2017

Silver box that is not to be sniffed at

A Victorian silver snuff box engraved with a view of East Cliff Lodge in Ramsgate sold for a mighty £40,000 (plus 22% buyer's premium) at Matthew Barton's sale held at 25 Blythe Road, London, on May 24 2017.

It was secured by a private collector at a sum way above the £800-1200 estimate.

Identifying the landmarks depicted on these small boxes is seldom straightforward but, as he researched this item, Barton was given a generous clue by the inclusion to the inside cover of the Montefiore crest.

East Cliff Lodge in Ramsgate, built in the mid 1790s and boasting extensive gardens, romantic tunnels cut into the chalk and stupendous views out to sea, was first the country house of Caroline of Brunswick and later owned by the Marquess of Wellesley, a brother of the Duke of Wellington.

However, it is best associated with Sir Moses Haim Montefiore (1784-1885), the financier and philanthropist who served as president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews for 39 years from 1835-74. He first rented the property in 1822 and purchased it in 1830.

The house itself was demolished in 1954 but the mausoleum in which Montefiore and his wife were laid to rest and the private synagogue they had built in the grounds still exist.

The decoration to this otherwise typical 3½in (9cm) box by Hilliard & Thomason of Birmingham echoes closely one of two known (but currently untraced) watercolour views of the house painted by Turner around 1797. It seems likely the engraver worked directly from them or at least from a print.

It was probably a one-off commission by or for Montefiore. Accordingly, although desirable as a 'castle top' snuff box – a collecting genre that has reached record levels of late – Barton told ATG that "its primary appeal was its close ties with a seminal figure in British Jewish history".



Two views of a Victorian silver snuffbox by Hilliard & Thomason, Birmingham, 1854, engraved with a view of East Cliff Lodge, Ramsgate and the crest of the Montefiore family
£40,000

Matthew Barton - 24 May 2017

‘Le Boba’ sets auction record for Star Wars figure

A new record for a Star Wars production figure was established by Vectis on July 19 2016 when a French issue of Boba Fett, the memorable bit-part character in *The Empire Strikes Back*, sold for £21,000 (plus 20% premium).

The figure formed part of a collection – deemed to be the best to ever come up for public auction – that had been 40 years in the making. Many of the pieces had been on display in a European museum before reaching Thornaby near Stockton-on-Tees.

All carded production figures of Boba Fett are very desirable. The figure was initially available only as a mail order freebie for those who had bought other models.

When Vectis sold the Craig Stevens collection in 2013, the Palitoy version of this figure, preserved in mint condition on its ‘un-punched card back’, took £15,000. The French version, retailed by Meccano, is thought to be rarer still. This example was deemed near mint with the square punched card back rated as ‘good plus’. Estimated at £4000-5000, it sold to an American buyer.

Original packaging is all-important in Star Wars collecting but there are exceptions. From the same collection was a figure that has assumed legendary status among Star Wars collectors: the Rocket Firing Boba Fett. Modelled in grey-blue plastic in advance of mass production by the Kenner factory in Ohio, it would forever remain a prototype figure. Fears that children could potentially choke on the small red rocket led to its demise. The example here – authenticated by the US-based Action Figure Authority – carried an estimate of £15,000-20,000 and sold on its lower estimate.



Top: The US rocket-firing Boba Fett
£15,000 (sold in 2013)

Right inset: The French issue Boba Fett Star Wars figure
£21,000

Vectis - 19 July 2016

Bottled-up demand for medicine that ‘restores life’

A new record for an empty English medicine bottle was set by BBR Auctions in Elsecar, South Yorkshire, when Dr Sibley’s Solar Tincture took £8200 (plus 15% buyer’s premium).

The 7¾in (19cm) tapering rectangular bottle in aqua glass is a great rarity and this example is graded 9.5 out of 10. Blown in a mould and finished with a pontil mark, to one side are pictorial motifs – a radiant sun above a heraldic shield with the words *Mortetam Vita*. To the other side is the inscription in capitals *By His Majesty’s Royal Letters Patent Dr Sibley’s Solar Tincture*.

It was formerly part of the collection of Alan McEwen, author in 1977 of *Collecting Quack Cures...* He had purchased it in the late 1970s for £100 – turning down at the time the chance to own an earlier version at £120.

Estimated at £1200-1500 for the auction on October 2 2016, competition came from several sources, but ultimately two collectors in the room battled from around £5000. BBR’s Alan Blakeman told ATG that currently as many as 20 people are chasing material of this calibre with prices spiking up to 10-fold across the past six years. Twenty years ago he had sold a more desirable version of this bottle – in green glass with a rolled lip – for £2400.

Dr Ebenezer Sibly famously claimed great things for his ‘reanimating’ tincture. According to an advert that appeared in *The Times* in March, 1793: “In all circumstances of suicide, or sudden death, whether by blows, fits, falls, suffocation, strangulation, drowning, apoplexy, thunder and lightning, assassination, duelling, &c., immediate recourse should be had to this medicine, which will not fail to restore life, provided the organs and juices are in a fit disposition for it, which they undoubtedly are much oftener than is imagined.”

After Sibly’s death around 1800, his successor, JR Saffell, made fewer claims for the tincture but said it had “restored multitudes, who were on the verge of the grave, to health”. The medicine was still on sale in the 1870s, with this bottle dating from the middle years of the 19th century.



Three views of the bottle of Dr Sibley’s Solar Tincture
£8200

BBR Auctions - 2 October 2016

British radical loved by the Americans

Estimated at £800-1200, this 5in (12.5cm) high creamware mug decorated with a portrait of the radical politician and journalist John Wilkes (1725-97) sold for £10,000 (plus 22% buyer's premium) to lead the ceramics and glass sale at Woolley & Wallis in Salisbury on February 28 2017.

It was underbid in the room by an English collector but is now going to the US.

The inscription Wilkes And Liberty No. 45 to the barrel-shaped mug is as good as a date as it refers to the publication of the 45th issue of John Wilkes' sharp-tongued periodical *The North Briton*.

Wilkes was a hero to the likes of Samuel Adams and John Hancock and as both a critic of the government's taxation policy in the colonies and a supporter of the rebels in 1776, he has considerable transatlantic appeal.

The buyer in Salisbury was Robert Hunter, editor of *Ceramics in America* and a long-time collector-dealer of English political ceramics. He said: "There are a lot of collectors interested in Wilkes-related objects in America as we associate him with the cause of Independence."

The few surviving objects that bear his name carry a premium among political memorabilia collectors. In August 2016, Essex saleroom Sworders took an unexpected £2800 for a badly damaged creamware teapot with the same legend Wilkes and Liberty No 45.

A handful of Delftware plates carrying Wilkes' portrait (often showing his best-known physical attribute – crossed eyes) have appeared in the past decade, including that sold for £4500 at Bonhams in 2014.

This rare and well-preserved mug also, it seems, reappeared at auction after a brief sojourn in a private collection. Remarkably, what is almost certainly the same mug was offered at Tennants in Leyburn as part of a 'country house' sale in September 2011 when, correctly catalogued, it slipped through the net, selling for just £300. Who said British ceramics were a poor investment?



John Wilkes creamware mug
£10,000

Woolley & Wallis - 28 February 2017

Shedding light on a £26,000 lantern

Triple lens or Triunial magic lanterns were the iPhone 8 of their day.

Since the days of the Sturm lantern in the 17th century, the technology had developed from basic projectors producing small, dimly lit images, to these magnificent machines capable of spectacular technicolour lantern entertainments.

Its three lenses enabled a skilled lanternist to produce dissolving views – day seamlessly becoming night, silent volcanoes suddenly erupting – and moving picture effects. The height of this type of entertainment was reached in the 1880s when cast members were employed behind the scenes to providing sound effects for daily shows.

Triunials were manufactured by a number of firms. The example offered by Brightwells in Leominster on July 27 2017 was titled The Docwra Triple – the invention of the English lanternist and showman Colin Dockwra. His triple lantern gained a gold medal at the Crystal Palace photographic exhibition in 1888, and was offered for sale the following year by the London optician and lantern maker William Charles Hughes (1844-1908).

Hughes, whose name and Mortimer Road address appears to the nameplate, is remembered as a pioneer of the British film industry: he was responsible for two films of Victoria's 1897 Diamond Jubilee procession.

Triunial magic lanterns are rare survivors but do make occasional saleroom appearances: Special Auction Services in Newbury sold one – The Noakes Triple – in July last year for £10,000.

The vendor of Brightwells' rare survivor was the widow of a Worcestershire camera and lantern enthusiast whose core collection had been sold by the Leominster firm a number of years ago. The lantern was kept as the jewel of the collection.

On display in the saleroom since March, it generated interest from multiple bidders at its £6000-8000 estimate, and was finally knocked down to one of two phone bidders at £26,000 (plus 17.5% buyer's premium). The purchaser from the UK, who knew the vendor, said it would be used regularly.



A triunial magic lantern. Details show the complex triple rack and pinion lens extensions plus the brass plate reading The Docwra Triple, W.C. Hughes, Patentee & Manufacturer £26,000

Brightwells of Leominster - 27 July 2017

Mackintosh in high demand

A very rare ebonised sycamore and canvas side chair designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh for Kate Cranston's home sold for \$470,000 (£362,000) at Sotheby's New York on June 6 2017 (plus 25/20/12% buyer's premium).

It was among 20 lots consigned by Jacqueline Loewe Fowler, a well-known US collector of costume and British and American decorative arts. The estimate was \$100,000-150,000 and the resulting price the highest for Mackintosh for many years.

This chair is one of only two made to this lattice work design created by Mackintosh for Miss Cranston, as part of the redecoration of Hous'hill in Nitshill, Glasgow in 1904.

Cranston had already emerged as the designer's most important patron: his fourth tea-room commission for her, the Willow Tea Rooms, had recently opened.

A photograph of the chairs in situ in the White Bedroom appeared in *The Studio Year-Book of Decorative Art*, 1907. Cranston sold Hous'hill and its contents in 1920 with the Mackintosh furniture dispersed by Glasgow auctioneer J&R Edmonton on May 13, 1933. The house, badly damaged by a fire, was subsequently demolished in 1937.

This chair, accompanied by a copy of an original 1933 bill of sale, was last on the market in November 2001 when it was offered at Christie's King Street. It was later pictured in Roger Billcliffe's 2009 catalogue *Charles Rennie Mackintosh, The Complete Furniture, Furniture Drawings & Interior Designs*.

The only other White Bedroom chair is in the collection of the Musée d'Orsay in Paris.

The Important Design sale was led by eight verre églomisé panels from *The Birth of Aphrodite* mural which decorated the grand salon of the SS Normandie luxury liner. The property of the Forbes collection, they sold for \$1,150,000 (£855,500).



Charles Rennie Mackintosh chair for Kate Cranston
\$470,000 (£362,000)

Sotheby's New York - 6 June 2017

Crime, punishment and phrenology

Victorian plaster cast heads of British criminals were not simply macabre souvenirs. Most were created post-mortem as research for the pseudo-science of phrenology – the study of the size and shape of the brain and skull to determine personality.

Steven Parkinson, auctioneer and valuer at Thomson Roddick in Carlisle, encountered a table full of more than a dozen early to mid-19th century plaster heads when valuing the contents of a rural estate near Penrith.

"I was told there was 'nowt of interest' in the outbuildings but we auctioneers always persist." He was amused to see one head had been decorated with lipstick and rouge – evidence that it had been used by the vendor's daughter for make-up practice.

While many interested parties were keen to purchase the nine lots close to their £100-200 estimates, come January 27 2017 four bidders proved rather more committed. In particular, a collector from the south of England bidding via thesaleroom.com proved successful on seven lots, paying a massive £20,000 (plus 20.5% buyer's premium) for a head annotated with the name of the subject, Francois Benjamin Courvoisier, murderer of Lord William Russell and the date May 1840. It was further signed Brucciano, Waterloo Bridge, probably for Nicolao Brucciani (b.1780), a member of a family of plaster figure makers who came to England c.1820.

Courvoisier (1816-40), a Swiss-born valet facing the sack, confessed to

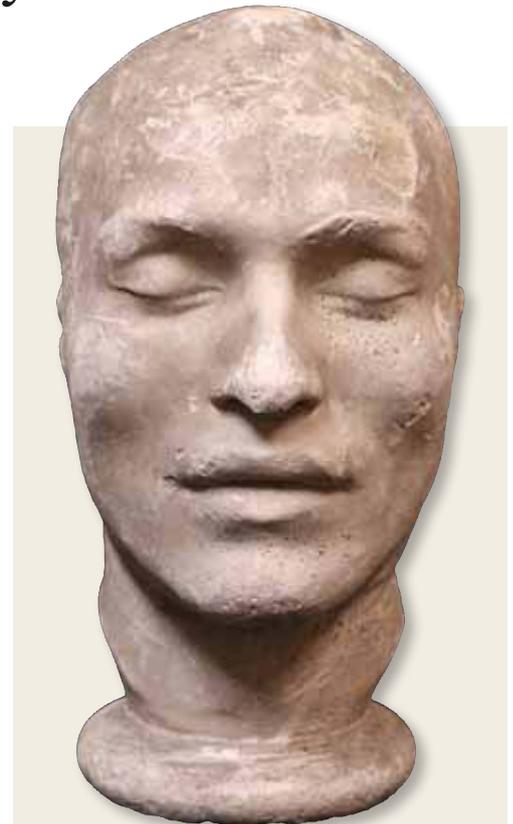
cutting the throat of his employer who lay sleeping in his Park Lane home following a night at Brooks. A crowd of around 40,000 witnessed the hanging outside Newgate Prison on July 6, 1840, including William Makepeace Thackeray, whose influential essay denouncing capital punishment, *On going to see a man hanged*, documented the morning's events.

Other lots, all with condition issues, took between £650 and £2000 each. Most were unmarked but others gave possible clues to identity through dates and model numbers.

Sold at £1300 was a bust carrying the name J. DeVile, 367 Strand, London and the publishing date of May 23, 1842. James Deville (1777-1846), whose lengthy obituary was published in the *Phrenological Journal and Magazine of Moral Science*, took his first post-mortem cast in July 1817, later building a private museum of over 5000 specimens.

This particular head may depict Daniel Good, a coachman from Roehampton who was executed at Newgate on May 23, 1842, for the murder and mutilation of his pregnant mistress Jane Jones.

The Metropolitan Police's Crime Museum has another bust of Good in its extensive collection of plaster heads formed following the closure of Newgate Prison in 1902.



Russell mask
£20,000

Thomson Roddick - 27 January 2017

Small is beautiful for rugby playbook

The laws of rugby as we came to know it were first written out in longhand by three pupils of the school in August 1845. A local printer, Crossley and Billington, published them in a tiny pocket-sized booklet and the rules were often carried in waistcoat pockets during games. The exact bibliography of the printing is unclear but the booklet offered by Rogers Jones in Cardiff on May 13 2016, as part of a themed sale titled *Sweat, Mud & Blood*, is considered a unique and unrecorded printing of the early rules.

Titled *The Laws of Football as Played at Rugby School*, it measures a mere 3.3 x 1.9in (8.4 x 5cm) and numbers just 17 pages that together list 33 rules. They include: "All matches are drawn after five days, or after three days if no goal is kicked; No hacking with the heel, or unless below the knee, is fair; No player may take the ball out of the close, i.e behind the line of trees beyond the goal." On the red card cover of this copy are the initials HW that relate to an inscription inside, H Waddington, October 3rd 1851.

There were two Rugbaeans who this could be: Horace Waddington, who attended the school from 1850-53, or William Henry Waddington (1829-94), a future Prime Minister of France and statesman who played a significant role in the development of the modern Olympic Games.

There is no record of a similar copy of *The Laws* having ever been offered publicly for sale. This one, found by a former book store owner among a huge stock of rugby books, was pitched at £1000-1500 but sold to a private collector in the UK at £13,000. Auctioneer Ben Rogers Jones said: "In 25 years of our business, it is the most valuable book we have sold and probably the smallest."



The Laws of Football as Played at Rugby School
£13,000

Rogers Jones - 13 May 2016

Rare reminder of tragic royal reign

A coin sold in the Dix Noonan Webb (20% buyer's premium) auction on March 15 2017 is a poignant reminder of the mysterious death of the Princes in the Tower.

The rare gold Angel dates from the tragically brief reign of Edward V, the shortest-lived male monarch in English history. It was bought by a UK private collector bidding in the room for £42,000 against an estimate of £12,000-15,000. It was found in a Dorset field by a metal detectorist in August last year.

Research into the Angel – with its image of the Archangel Saint Michael slaying a dragon – revealed that it was minted during the reign of the 12-year-old who was king for just 86 days in 1483. Edward, one of only four English monarchs never to have been crowned, and his younger brother vanished into a dungeon in the Tower of London.

The Angel's halved sun and rose mint mark, which indicates where and when it was made, and the legend Edward Di Gra, show that it was minted during the reign of the boy king who nominally ruled from April 9-June 25.

It was probably struck on the orders of Lord Hastings, Chamberlain of the Royal Household, and this reduces the timeframe to June 13 when Hastings was executed. In reality, the coin is likely to have been minted in April or May 1483 as Edward and his brother were incarcerated at the beginning of June.

Their uncle, Richard of Gloucester, had ordered their imprisonment and then seized the throne, being crowned Richard III on June 26, 1483. Shortly after, the dies used to mint coins were altered to read Ricard Di Gra and the mint mark was overstruck with his personal emblem, a boar's head.

Whether Richard was the monster of Shakespearean repute or a much maligned monarch is a question still fiercely debated, of course.



A gold Angel struck in 1483 during the 86-day reign of Edward V
£42,000

Dix Noonan Webb - 15 March 2017

‘Boot fair’ Sikh miniature brings major sum

A LARGE Indian gouache on paper miniature (right), measuring 23in x 2ft 10in (59 x 85cm), sold for £75,000 (plus 23% buyer’s premium) at Roseberys on April 15 2016, the unexpected highlight of a specialist Islamic and Indian Arts sale. Given a rudimentary catalogue description and estimated at £500-1000, it was contested by multiple bidders before it sold on the phone.

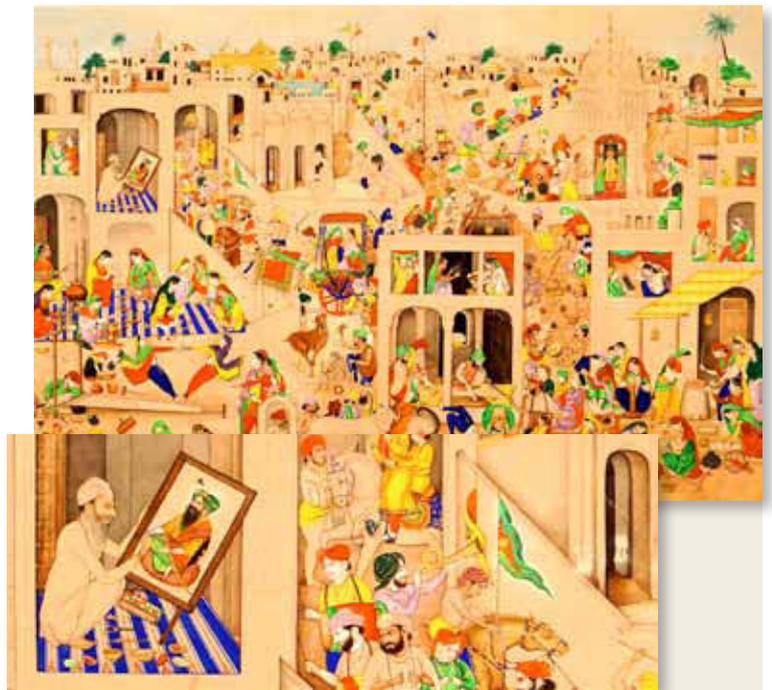
Key to its appeal was the subject matter, identified by bidders as the walled old town of Amritsar with the Golden Temple or Harmandir Sahib, the holiest religious complex of the Sikh religion, in the background.

The artist is thought to be Baba Bishan Singh (1836-c.1900), one of a family of painters operating in Lahore and Amritsar in the second half of the 19th century responsible for maintaining the murals and motifs on the walls of the Golden Temple. The artist includes himself among the hundreds of figures: he is seen painting a portrait in an alcove of a building in the top left of the composition.

At the exhibition of arts and crafts held at Lahore in 1864, Bishan Singh showed 10 pictures including Darbars of Ranjit Singh, Sher Singh and the Municipal Committee, Amritsar. They attracted the attention of Robert Baden-Powell, who wrote in his Handbook of the Manufactures and Arts of the Punjab that “the perspective of the buildings is incorrect but the figure drawing is admirable”. The possibility arises that this bustling scene was among them.

A 15 x 20½in (38 x 52cm) miniature by Bishan Singh depicting the court of the Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839) and his family c.1864 sold for \$233,587 at Christie’s in October 2008 but another of 1872 depicting the city of Srinagar was offered in June last year but, estimated at £100,000-150,000, failed to sell.

Roseberys’ vendor was a London taxi driver who had bought his prize at a car boot sale 30 years ago for £40 – haggling the seller down from £60. Specialist Peter Greenway called him after the sale to pass on the good news: “He told me what a bad day he was having as his taxi had a flat tyre and he wasn’t able to go to work. Having heard the news he decided to give himself the weekend off.”



The 23in x 2ft 10in (59 x 85cm) miniature of life in the old town of Amritsar by Baba Bishan Singh
£75,000

The artist painted himself into the composition (see detail).

Roseberys - 15 April 2016

Wood the Elder's instruments 'return home'

Bath Preservation Trust bought John Wood the Elder's (1704-54) set of drawing instruments, which were sold at Clevedon Auction Rooms on March 10 2016 for £21,000 (£26,000 including 20% commission). It has already gone on public display in the Museum of Bath Architecture, along with other items describing Wood's contribution to the design and development of the city.

The set, made c.1745 by the leading architectural instrument maker Thomas Heath of London, is housed in a silver and shagreen case engraved with Wood the Elder's name in script and his coat of arms. It was discovered in the drawer of a Bristol home – the vendor unaware of the significance of the name, almost lost behind years of tarnish, until it was pointed out at a valuation day. The estimate was £4000-6000.

Dr Amy Frost, architectural curator of Bath Preservation Trust, told ATG: "As soon as we saw the drawing instruments in early January, we knew the most appropriate home for them and commissioned an independent valuation from Duncan Campbell of the Beau Nash gallery."

Silver specialist Campbell, whose assessment of "£20,000-plus one bid" proved on the money, bid for the trust in the room. His shop is aptly situated on Brock Street in Bath, which runs between The Circus (1764) and the The Royal Crescent (1776), both designed by Wood and completed after his death by his son John Wood the Younger.

Frost added that the museum (making their first purchase at auction) were grateful to the Art Fund, the V&A Purchase Grant Fund and pledges from several local donors "who responded in an amazingly short time so that we could secure the set despite determined bidding from others on the day".



**John Wood the Elder's (1704-54) set of drawing instruments
£21,000**

One vacant aperture would suggest that a piece is missing, although a silver scale ruler, an ivory sector ruler with silver mounts, compass, dividers, bow, two pens and a pencil have all survived in excellent condition. Some minor conservation work will repair a hinge.

Clevedon Auction Rooms - 10 March 2016

The Australian gold rush of 2016

A remarkable Australian gold rush era bracelet (right) was sold by Chorley's of Prinknash Abbey Park on September 20 2016 for £57,000 (plus 20% buyer's premium). The buyer was an Australian private collector.

The bracelet was one of three pieces that came by direct descent from Hugh Hamilton (1822-1900), the younger son of the Hamiltons of Sundrum in Ayrshire, who in the 1840s opened the Tomabil and Boyd cattle stations on the Lachlan River in New South Wales. After losing most of his herd in a severe drought in 1849, he took on the post of assistant gold commissioner at Ophir, near Bathurst, during the 1851 gold rush but eventually returned successfully to farming.

The distinctive Antipodean jewellery of this period is among the first to depict the native flora and fauna and is of huge cultural significance to Australia and its mining heritage. Similar objects can be found in the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, and the National Library of Australia, Canberra.

The bracelet is very much in the style of the Sydney firm of Julius Hogarth and Conrad Erichsen – pioneers of the style – but bears the mark of Christian Ludwig Qwist (1818-77). A goldsmith and topographical photographer, he worked for Hogarth and Erichsen just prior to their 1861 bankruptcy, and it is likely that the oxidised silver figures of emu, kangaroo and Aborigine would have been supplied by Julius Hogarth c.1863-65. Few bracelets of this quality survive and this example had been expected to achieve between £6000-8000.



Top: two views of a bracelet by Christian Ludwig Qwist
£57,000

Above left: a brooch c.1860 by Hogarth and Erichsen
£14,000

Above right: a pair of unmarked earrings
£1900

Chorley's - 20 September 2016

From the lens to the small screen

A rare early photographic instrument – bought for a song by a member of the BBC’s Antiques Road Trip team – sold for £20,000 at Lacy Scott & Knight (17.5% buyer’s premium) in Bury St Edmunds on May 13 2017.

The subject of this small-screen drama (to be aired in September) was a *Chambre Automatique De Bertsch* or *Chambre Microscopique* – an instrument in which the camera and the microscope were effectively combined.

Relatively little is known about the Paris photographer, inventor and optician Auguste Adolphe Bertsch (born c.1813, he was killed during the Paris Commune of 1871) but his specialty was the micrograph – a photograph that could accurately record what had previously been seen only through a microscope or by artistic rendering.

In 1851 he photographed lice, antennae of flies and crystals and in 1853 presented his research at the Académie des Sciences. Salt prints of his work with titles such as *Pou de l’abeille domestique grossiment 300 diametres* (lice of the honey bee magnified 300 times) are held by a number of international museums.

Remarkably, the instrument had been bought earlier in the month by Carlisle auctioneer and valuer Paul Laidlaw while a contestant on the 15th series of *Antiques Road Trip*. It had cost under £100 from a shop on the Kent coast. It was in good condition and retained both the brass wet plate fixed-focus camera (serial number 229 for c.1861) and a quartet of reagent bottles that would have allowed for use while travelling.

Ed Crichton, fine art manager at Lacy Scott & Knight, had been amazed to see it arrive alongside nine less distinguished objects.

Exact comparisons were hard to find but a much larger and more extensive ‘*chambre automatique*’ by Bertsch formed part of a sale held by Vienna camera specialist WestLicht Photographica in May 2013. It had sold for €150,000 (plus 20% buyer’s premium).

“It really shouldn’t have gone into a general sale but that is the rule of the show,” said Crichton. It was only online for three days but we wanted to do it justice so contacted the right people. In the end it sold to a private collector in Switzerland bidding via thesaleroom.com.”

It is a record profit (the money is donated to charity) for the show, smashing the previous best: a Tibetan bronze bodhisattva bought for £50 by Anita Manning of Great Western Auctions and sold for £3800 last year.



The *Chambre Automatique De Bertsch*, a combined camera and microscope
£20,000

*A brass plaque to the lid reads *Chambre Automatique De Bertsch* BTE SGS No 229.*

Lacy Scott & Knight - 13 May 2017

£32,000 for Trafalgar ‘powder monkey’

The Naval General Service Medal (NGSM) given to George James Perceval (1794-1874), who served at the Battle of Trafalgar aged 11, sold to a phone bidder for £32,000 at Brightwells of Leominster on March 15 2016.

With the encouragement of his well-connected father – a Tory politician and one of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty – Perceval quit Harrow and mustered on July 30, 1805, as a Volunteer 1st Class in the 74-gun HMS Orion under Captain Edward Codrington.

His job as ‘powder monkey’ would have been to run between decks carrying gunpowder and messages from the captain. George wrote cheerfully to his mother eight days before the battle that he hoped to be home for Christmas if his head was not knocked off. It is probable his first experience of enemy fire was on October 21 when Orion forced the surrender of the 74-gun French ship Intrepide.

Perceval took to life at sea, later commanding HMS Infernal during the bombardment of Algiers in 1816 before following his father into politics and the House of Lords in the 1830s.

During his career he was awarded the NGSM with four clasps including those for Trafalgar, Algiers and two rare awards for 1 Nov Boat Service 1809 (an action off the north coast of Spain while serving in HMS Tigre) and 4 April Boat Service 1812 (for the capture of a French privateer).

The latter is particularly rare (the medal roll indicates there were only four recipients of the 4 April Boat Service 1812, although this is a probable unrecorded fifth) and makes this a unique combination of clasps.

The group (together with a Boulton Trafalgar medal) had been passed down through the Perceval family and came for sale from the executors of the late Miss EM Perceval with an estimate of £8000-10,000.

A portrait of George James Perceval in midshipman’s uniform, probably commissioned by the family from George Francis Joseph (1764-1846) to mark Perceval’s entry into the Royal Navy, sold at £4500 in the same sale.



The Naval General Service Medal with four clasps awarded to George James Perceval (1794-1874)
£32,000

Brightwells - 15 March 2016

The Regent's piano returns home

A grand piano commissioned by George IV in 1821 is to return to Brighton Pavilion after it sold for £62,000 at Piano Auctions (20% buyer's premium) in London on April 6 2017.

This much-published instrument, with a rosewood and cut brass case, can clearly be seen among the furnishings of the Entrance Hall in a plate from John Nash's Views of the Royal Pavilion, 1826.

The original invoice from the London maker Thomas Tomkison for 225 guineas (well over twice the cost of a standard top-quality grand piano at the time) survives in the Royal Archives at Windsor Castle while a note inside the piano states simply For the King.

Born in London c.1764 and first recorded as a piano maker in 1802, relatively little is known of Tomkison.

However, from at least 1809 his nameboard cartouches declared him to be Maker to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and, from 1811, Maker to the Prince Regent. He is renowned for his flamboyant approach to case decoration that doubtless suited George's adventurous taste.

Until recently the piano – once played by a 13-year-old Franz Liszt at Windsor – had been on loan to the Colt Clavier Collection of early keyboard instruments assembled by CF Colt in the 1950s and housed at the village hall of Bethersden in Kent. The executors of his widow Lore Barbara Colt, who died recently, consigned it for sale along with four other pianos.

Specialist Richard Reason of Piano Auctions told ATG: "We had interest from collectors from around the world for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

Valued at £30,000-50,000, a bidding contest at the Conway Hall, Holborn, was won by a representative of the Royal Pavilion and Museums Foundation.

Commenting on the acquisition, Alan Robins said: "Prince Regent's piano has long been on our wish list so we're thrilled to be bringing it back to its rightful home."

"The piano is playable but as it's been dormant for 20 years will need some restoration. It would be amazing to be able to hear music of the period played on it."



The Prince Regent's piano by Thomas Tomkison
£62,000

A detail of a handwritten note to the frame reading For the King.

Piano Auctions - 6 April 2017

Tribal necklace “a complete sleeper” in Surrey

Some good old-fashioned saleroom drama ensued at Ewbank’s of Send in Surrey on December 1 2016 when a tribal art necklace estimated at £60-100 sold to a buyer from Continental Europe at £99,000 (plus 22.5% premium).

Although described simply as an ‘ethnic carved bone and antler necklace’, this house clearance lot was identified by specialists as a rare survivor from the southern Cook Islands. Auctioneer Chris Ewbank told *ATG*: “It was a complete sleeper. The day before the sale we had been tipped a wink that it could make £10,000 but no one was expecting this.” There was bidding in the room up to £50,000 before two bidders, an Australian and the European dealer, took up the competition. Ewbank later spoke to the vendor, who told him he had considered taking it to the car boot fair across the A3 with a £15 price tag.

The chain of islands extending through the Austral group to Mangaia in the southern Cook Islands are known for producing some of the most elegant of all Pacific necklaces. Many were made in the 19th century for high-status individuals from marine ivory (probably sperm whale teeth) suspended from woven coconut fibres or sennit bound with human hair. The precise meaning of the carved amulets is unknown but it is possible those similar to testicles performed a fertility function.

A similar necklace or tabua in the British Museum was bought in 1911 from the London Missionary Society in Mangaia. Another in the Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, was acquired in 1948 when the New Zealand government bought the Māori and Pacific collection of the London dealer WO Oldman for about £40,000.

Sperm whales were very occasionally found stranded on beaches in the Pacific islands with their teeth highly valued by the indigenous communities well before the advent of commercial whaling.



Rare necklace from the southern Cook Islands
£99,000

Ewbank’s - 1 Decmeber 2016

Breaking news of a Jacobite rarity

The highlight of Lyon & Turnbull's sale of Scottish Silver & Applied Arts on August 16 2017 was a Jacobite drinking glass with a difference.

Why the need for a silver repair to this relatively simple, plain 18th century vessel?

Bruce of Cowden family history suggests that – during a visit by Bonnie Prince Charlie himself in advance of the '45 rebellion – the glass was broken after a toast was given to 'The King Over the Water'. It was traditional to break a glass after drinking a toast to save a lesser tribute being drunk from it.

The man tasked with preserving such an emotive object was Patrick Murray, a goldsmith in Stirling. Using red sealing wax to secure it to the teardrop stem, he fashioned a new foot in silver with six lobes engraved with the words God Blis King James The Eight.

Relatively little is known about Murray as a craftsman – only a handful of pieces with his mark are recorded – but he was a known Jacobite. After serving in Lord George Murray's Brigade, he was taken prisoner in November 1745 and, a year later in Carlisle, executed for his part in the rebellion.

The Bruce of Cowden glass descended in the family until 1924 when it was first sold at Sotheby's. Last sold (again at Sotheby's) as part of the Anthony Waugh collection in April 1980, it was offered in Edinburgh as part of a private collection of Jacobite glass.

Perhaps the closest comparison to this piece is the fabled (and occasionally faked) diamond-point engraved Amen Glasses which rank among the most valuable of all 18th century drinking glasses.

Estimated at £8000-12,000, the Bruce of Cowden glass took £20,000 (plus 25% buyer's premium) from a private collector.



Jacobite drinking glass with details of the engravings to the six lobes on the silver foot
£20,000

Lyon & Turnbull - 16 August 2017

Eyewitness view of Dunkirk evacuation

It may be strange and surreal, but John Spencer-Churchill's (1909-92) landscape panorama of the evacuation of Dunkirk is the only depiction of the event known to have been painted by an eyewitness.

When it went under the hammer at Lindsay Burns (20% buyer's premium) in Perth on December 6 2017 with an estimate of £800-1200, competition was fierce. It eventually sold to London dealer Andrew Sim at £26,000.

The 3ft 4in x 5ft 4in (1 x 1.64m) oil shows the evacuation on Wednesday, May 29, 1940 looking towards Dunkirk from the Bray Dunes.

Spencer-Churchill, then a captain in the Royal Engineers, later wrote of "a strange, absolutely incredible moment" when "a squadron of French cavalry suddenly appeared and galloped silently across the soft sands".

Spencer-Churchill was Winston Churchill's nephew. On his arrival in London, still damp in his battle dress, he pleaded with his uncle to send a fleet of small craft to Dunkirk.

The picture was hung at Chartwell before it was given to the Institute of Army Education and was consigned to this sale by a local vendor who bought it at auction in the 1970s.

Sim calls it a picture of "huge national and international importance" and plans to use it as the centrepiece of his annual wartime exhibition, *Holding the Line*, next year.

"What makes it stand out is its quality of actual testimony," Sim adds. "Facts and scenes that might have seemed peculiar or unlikely when told second-hand give the finished piece its veracity."



John Spencer-Churchill eyewitness view of Dunkirk
£26,000

Lindsay Burns - 6 December 2017



Fine Tudor oak panel fetches king's ransom

Very much the pièce de résistance of Bonhams' first oak interior sale held in their New Bond Street rooms on February 24 2016 was the final lot of the day, a 23 x 17in (58.5 x 44.5cm) Tudor oak panel carved in high relief with a portrait of a king holding an orb and sceptre, thought to represent King John.

The panel, which was spotted by the vendor, oak furniture and works of art specialist Paul Fitzsimmons on eBay, is stylistically linked to two others of similar size, also carved in high relief with crowned bust portraits, one in the Victoria and Albert Museum the other, re-coloured and gilt some time after it appeared at auction in 1912, now in the Museum of London.

Both Bonhams' and the V&A's panel feature shields carved with the lions or leopards of England. On the basis of a known provenance for the Museum of London panel to the London mansion of William Paulet, Marquis of Winchester, the auctioneers suggested that all three were made for one of the homes of this wealthy Tudor administrator whose career spanned the reigns of Henry VIII to Elizabeth I.

Bonhams' specialist David Houlston said there were rebates to the back of their panel showing it would have been set within something, though it was not known whether the three would have formed part of the fittings of a room setting or a mantelpiece but that "they must have hung together at one point".

Quality English Renaissance carving does not come up for auction that often and when the panel made its appearance last month with an estimate of £20,000-30,000, it attracted plenty of potential interest from the phones and room up to this level. But the main bidding was down to two contestants: the London works of art dealer Patricia Wengraf who deemed it "a fine piece" and the ultimately successful purchaser, a phone bidder who secured the lot at £152,000.



Tudor oak panel
£152,000

Bonhams, New Bond Street - 24 February 2016

Roar power fuels medieval record

A pair of lions from the funerary monument of Charles V of France was the toast of Christie's Exceptional sale in London on July 6 2017.

The auction house had hoped the season's greatest rediscovery could make at least as much as a pair of marble mourners from the tomb of the Duc de Berry (brother of Charles V) at Christie's Paris last year. They had sold to the Louvre at €4.4m (£3.67m).

Christie's was not disappointed. The lions bettered their 'on request' estimate of around £4m to sell over the phone at £8.2m (plus 25/20/12% buyer's premium), a record for medieval art at auction.

The 18in (46cm) adorsed figures of seated beasts would have been placed at the feet of the king's effigy, one of a group of four family tombs commissioned by the 26-year-old Charles V for the royal necropolis of the Basilica of Saint Denis in Paris.

The sculptor André Beauneveu (c.1335-1402) and his workshop took two years from 1364-66 to complete monuments to Charles, his father and his paternal grandparents.

Like many of the royal tombs, Charles V's resting place was dismantled in 1793 during the Revolution. Elements were salvaged by archaeologist Alexandre Lenoir (1769-1839) for a museum of French monuments, and the effigy has since been restored to Saint Denis.

The lions, hitherto known only to scholars from an 18th century drawing and an engraving, had been in the same English family for over 200 years, since they were acquired in France – probably from Lenoir himself – by the English aristocrat Sir Thomas Neave (1761-1848).

An engraved silver plaque on the base reads These Lyons were brought from St Dennis in 1802 by Sir T. N. having been placed at the feet of the recumbent statue of Charles V of France on the tomb which is now in Paris in the Musée Des Monumens.

"They are really fantastic", says Christie's sculpture specialist Donald Johnston. "I've known of them for over 20 years and I was always hoping that one day the owner would decide to sell."

Johnston visited Saint Denis several times to confirm that the marble and the polishing of the stone was identical. One detail was crucial: "To the reverse of the lions are the remains of two little dowels that fit into the effigy. I measured both and they are exactly the same distance apart."

The Louvre has previously used its power of pre-emption to secure fragments from the royal tombs that have sold in France.

However, with no similar law existing in the UK, Charles V's lions are thought to have been sold to an American buyer.



Pair of lions from the funerary monument of Charles V of France c.1364-66
£8.2m

An engraved silver plaque reads:
These Lyons were brought from St Dennis in 1802.

Christie's - 6 July 2017

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