

# CHRISTIE'S

PRESS RELEASE | LONDON  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | Monday, 31 March 2014

## WORKS OF ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE MARQUESSSES OF LONDONDERRY Christie's London, 23 May 2014



Alexandre-Jean Dubois-Drahonet (Paris 1791-1834 Versailles)  
(Detail) Portrait of Frances Anne Vane, Marchioness of Londonderry (1800-1865), inside Westminster Abbey  
for the Coronation of William IV, her dress mounted with the pink topazes given to her by Tsar Alexander I of Russia  
Estimate: £12,000-18,000

**London** – Christie's is proud to announce that *Works of Art from the Collection of the Marquesses of Londonderry* will be offered at auction on 23 May as part of a two day sale, following *The Raglan Collection: Wellington, Waterloo & The Crimea* on 22 May, please click [here](#) for separate press release. These two distinguished historical aristocratic families are linked through their prominence in early 19<sup>th</sup> century British history. Comprising a total of over 500 lots, the sale as a whole presents a cornucopia of rare and unique opportunities which will excite connoisseurs, institutions and enthusiasts around the world; it is expected to realise a combined total in the region of £1.5 million.

**Adrian Hume-Sayer, Specialist and Associate Director, House Sales:** *"The Londonderry name will be familiar to many as that of one of Britain's wealthiest aristocratic dynasties and is synonymous with the important art collection they assembled. Londonderry House, Mayfair was amongst the grandest of London's townhouses, occupying a position at the heart of the capital's social and political life for almost 150 years; it is from Londonderry House and the family's grandest country house, the palatial Wynyard Park, that this collection of works of art come. The historic importance of the family as politicians, industrialists, collectors and patrons, is evident throughout this fascinating group, which gives a rare glimpse into both the public and private lives of this illustrious family and provides a unique opportunity to acquire works which have never before been offered on the open market."*



The Vane-Tempest-Stewarts, Marquesses of Londonderry, epitomised the wealth and power of Victorian and Edwardian England. Their colossal riches, derived from collieries in the northeast and from extensive landed estates acquired through marriage, ensured their position at the centre of society. Three famous Marchionesses of Londonderry, Frances Anne Vane-Tempest, wife of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marquess; Theresa Chetwynd-Talbot, wife of the 6<sup>th</sup> Marquess, and Edith Chaplin, wife of the 7<sup>th</sup> Marquess, were all celebrated political hostesses, entertaining

the leading figures of the day in the grand and opulent settings of Londonderry House in Park Lane, Wynyard Park in County Durham, *illustrated above*, and Mount Stewart in County Down, Northern Ireland. This sale of over 200 objects collected by successive generations of the Marquesses of Londonderry offers an insight into a vanished world of grand political salons and of glamorous aristocratic house parties.

Although originally from Scotland, the Stewarts established themselves as powerful landowners in Ireland in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, with Robert Stewart being created Marquess of Londonderry in recognition of his political contribution to Ireland in 1816. His son, also Robert, who was better known by his courtesy title of Viscount Castlereagh, established the family's position at the centre of political life when, as Foreign Secretary, he led the British delegation at the Congress of Vienna. Robert Lefèvre's *Portrait of the Emperor Napoleon (1769-1821), as Colonel of the Foot Grenadiers of the Imperial Guard, 1805*, provides a reminder of Castlereagh's leading role in the defeat of Napoleon and in the reconstruction of Europe following the Napoleonic wars (estimate: £80,000-120,000, *illustrated right*). He became 2<sup>nd</sup> Marquess in 1821 on his father's death, only to die childless by his own hand the following year.



Castlereagh was succeeded as 3<sup>rd</sup> Marquess of Londonderry by his half-brother Charles Stewart, who had had a distinguished military career, serving under the Duke of Wellington in the Peninsular War; it was from Londonderry that Wellington acquired his magnificent Arab horse Copenhagen. The sale includes a *Life Guards 'Albert Pattern' Officer's helmet*, almost certainly owned by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marquess (estimate: £1,500-2,500, *illustrated left*). Both he and his half-brother Robert Castlereagh were leading patrons of Sir Thomas Lawrence, and Lawrence's portrait of Stewart in military uniform is among the artist's most celebrated works (now on loan to the National Gallery, London). Stewart had been appointed by his half-

brother as British Ambassador in Vienna and it was at that time that he met his second wife, Frances Anne Vane-Tempest, the greatest heiress of her generation. Their marriage, in 1819, was to be the foundation of the Londonderry's huge fortune as Frances Anne brought with her an income of £60,000 a year from her estates and collieries in the northeast of England. The couple added to this wealth by acquiring the Seaham estate where they sunk several successful new pits and built the new harbour there to carry their coal to London and elsewhere and as rival to nearby Sunderland. Four paintings by Robert Mackreth and Mark Thompson, commissioned to commemorate the laying of the



foundation stone and the opening of Seaham Harbour and its blast furnaces, included in the sale, are rare illustrations of 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial development. The group includes *The laying of the foundation stone of Seaham Harbour, Co. Durham*, 1828, by Robert Mackreth (estimate: £20,000-30,000, *illustrated bottom right, page three*).

The Londonderrys were seated at Wynyard Park, County Durham, the ancestral house of the Tempests (*illustrated page 2*). The 3<sup>rd</sup> Marquess commissioned Philip Wyatt in 1822 to replace the old house with a grand mansion, but it was devastated by fire, just before completion, in 1841. Rebuilding commenced immediately under the direction of Ignatius Bonomi and the resulting house, which survives largely unaltered, is widely regarded as amongst the finest nineteenth-century houses in England.



The couple also purchased Holderness House (later renamed Londonderry House) in Park Lane, London in 1822, which they commissioned Benjamin Wyatt to rebuild on a much grander scale, at a reputed cost of £200,000. There the Londonderrys entertained the cream of society and, over the next 40 years, Frances Anne presided as the principal Tory hostess of her day. Her gatherings were famous for their grandeur. The young Disraeli, describing a reception given in 1838 following the Coronation of Queen Victoria, wrote “It was the finest thing of the season. Londonderry’s

regiment being reviewed, we had the band of the 10<sup>th</sup> playing on the staircase; the whole of the said staircase (a double one) being crowded with the most splendid orange trees and Cape jessamines... the Duke of Wellington and the very flower of fashion assembled.” Among the works being offered from Londonderry House is a pair of specimen-inlaid carrara marble and giltwood side tables, the tops Italian, *circa* 1800-20, the bases George IV, *circa* 1820-30 (estimate: £20,000 – 40,000, *one of pair illustrated right*).



By the time the 6<sup>th</sup> Marquess succeeded to the title in 1884, the Londonderrys were exceptionally rich and influential, even by the standards of the times. 10,000 miners worked in the Londonderry pits and coal was transported from Seaham to the Londonderry Wharf in Vauxhall and beyond. Their lands had increased to 50,000 acres in Ireland, the north of England and Wales (the latter, Plas Machynlleth in Montgomeryshire, brought by the advantageous marriage of the 4<sup>th</sup> Marquess), and their annual income was over £100,000. His wife, Theresa Chetwynd-Talbot, daughter of the 19<sup>th</sup> Earl of Shrewsbury (Premier Earl of England), continued Frances Anne’s tradition of lavish entertainment. Between 1890 and 1903 there were no fewer than six royal visits to Wynyard, which included the unique meeting of the Privy Council, *illustrated right*, held there on October 19, 1903, when the King appointed his host Lord President of the Council. This is believed to have been the first such meeting held in a country house belonging to a subject since 1625.



The 7<sup>th</sup> Marquess, who inherited following his father’s death in 1915, was Secretary of State for Air from 1931 to 1935 and his wife, Edith Chaplin, was the greatest political hostess of her day and founder of the Women’s Legion. Although he clashed with his cousin Winston Churchill, his encouragement of the development of the

Spitfire and Hurricane aircrafts was eventually to play a vital part in the Battle of Britain. When Lady Londonderry offered to lend Winston Churchill the Londonderry ancestral Star and Garter for the Coronation in 1953, he responded: "I shall feel it an honour to wear the insignia which belonged to Castlereagh and to all his successors".



The sale contains many other reminders of the illustrious history of the Londonderrys. A Louis XIV ormolu-mounted 'Boulle' bureau, *circa* 1700, which was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marquess's ambassadorial residence in Vienna, is expected to realise between £15,000 and £25,000, *illustrated left*. Miniatures include Tsar Alexander I, Emperor of Russia, attributed to Jean-Baptiste Isabey (estimate: £4,000-6,000, *illustrated right*); the King of the Netherlands (1815-1840) (estimate: £800- 1,200); the King of Prussia (1797-1840) (estimate: £600-800) and the King of Sweden (1809-1818) (estimate: £600-800) among others, which were presented to Lord Castlereagh, mounted in gold boxes, in recognition of his pivotal role in the peace following the Napoleonic wars. Further objects from Londonderry House include a pair of Italian olivewood commodes, *circa* 1800 (estimate: £10,000-15,000). Herbert Dicksee's dramatic portrayal of *The Dying Lion* came from the ballroom at Wynyard



(estimate: £70,000 – 100,000, *illustrated left*). A full length portrait of Castlereagh, after Sir Thomas Lawrence P.R.A, recalls the family's patronage of Lawrence and illustrates its most famous member (estimate: £5,000-8,000, *illustrated right*).



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*Images available on request*

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