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29 February 2008

CHRISTIE'S

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CHRISTIE'S TO OFFER THE CONTENTS OF FASQUE, THE SCOTTISH SEAT OF THE GLADSTONES, IN MAY 2008



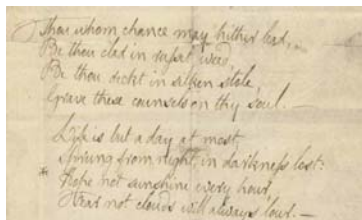
Fasque – The Scottish seat of the Gladstones

Wednesday, 7 May 2008

Christie's, 8 King Street, St. James's, London SW1Y 6QT

London - Christie's announce that they will offer at auction the contents of *Fasque – The Scottish seat of the Gladstones* in London on 7 May 2008. The house was acquired in 1830 by Sir John Gladstone, the father of one of the 19th Century's most revered Prime Ministers, William Ewart Gladstone. W E Gladstone spent a considerable amount of his time at Fasque, adding a variety of objects to the family's collection during his visits, many of which survive and will be offered at the sale. The historic contents of the house to be offered at Christie's include over 250 lots of furniture, old master pictures, antiquities, sculpture and Asian works of art, much of which has been in the house since 1830, as well as a handwritten letter by the great Scottish bard Robert Burns. Individual estimates range from £250 to £40,000 and the sale is expected to realise in excess of £1 million.

A handwritten letter from the great poet Robert Burns (1759-1796) to David Blair, a gunsmith from Birmingham, is expected to realise £8,000-12,000 *detail illustrated left*. Written on 23 January 1789 shortly



after Burns had moved from Edinburgh to the village of Ellisland north of Dumfries, this graceful letter includes 57 handwritten lines of his poem *Written in Friar's Carse Hermitage* together with a poetic meditation on human life. Robbie Burns had just begun to work as an excise man, perhaps explaining his need for a firearm, although he muses that 'the

Defensive tools..... with me shall have the fate of Miser's gold – to be often admired, but never to be used. David Blair had obviously made a great impact on Burns, who writes *'I shall only say that I have never parted with a man, after so little acquaintance, whom I more ardently wished to see again'*. The first recorded owner of the letter is James Currie (1756-1805), biographer of the poet, and it was in the possession of Mary Gladstone of Fasque by 1867; it has remained in the family ever since.

Sir John Gladstone assembled a comprehensive collection of paintings, including Dutch, Flemish, Italian and British Old Masters and approximately 40 works will be offered, including a dramatic rendering of *Saul and the witch of Endor* by the Strasbourg born painter, illustrator and stage designer, Philip Jacques de Loutherbourg (1740-1812), which is expected to realise £10,000-15,000; and a Landscape with figures by John Wootton (1682-1764), who, while well known as a sporting artist, was also a leading figure in the establishment of a classical landscape tradition in Britain (estimate: £5,000-£8,000).

The auction will offer a fascinating selection of 'Gladstoniana', including gifts and souvenirs from the collection of William Gladstone, four-time Prime Minister to Queen Victoria. The 'father of Irish Home Rule' adored Fasque and spent much time there, reserving a turret room for his political and intellectual pursuits. Highlights include a commemorative oak wheelbarrow and shovel, presented by the Chairman and directors of Wirral Railways to the Rt. Hon. W.E. Gladstone M.P. on 21 October 1892 (estimate: £3,000-£5,000), a marble bust of William Gladstone dated 1848 (estimate: £3,000-£5,000) and a group of leather Gladstone bags (estimate: £400-£600). Also included is a Document granting the Freedom of the City of Perth, Scotland, to William Ewart Gladstone, 26 November 1879 (£700-£1,000).



An impressive selection of sculpture from the 1st to the 19th Centuries is included in the collection, from a marble figure of a seated girl, attributed to Lorenzo Bartolini (1777-1850) (estimate: £30,000-£50,000) to a figure of Hyacinth by F. Macdonald, 1842 (estimate: £20,000-£30,000). From the age of antiquity, a Roman Archaitic marble herm of the Hermes Propylaitic, 1st century BC/AD carries an estimate of £20,000-£30,000 and a Roman marble table leg (Trapezohoros) *circa* 2nd century AD is expected to realise £10,000-£15,000

Japanese and Chinese sculpture and ceramics give an exotic flavour to the sale. Led by an exceptionally large 19th Century Japanese ivory model of an eagle brought back from Japan by the 3rd Baronet in 1890 (estimate: £20,000-£40,000), the collection further includes a massive Chinese Imari vase and cover, Quing dynasty, (estimate: £20,000-£30,000).

The auction will also offer a selection of furniture, including commissions from Gillows, Trotter and Morison's of Ayr, much of which is included in the inventory taken in 1830, shortly after Sir John Gladstone moved into Fasque. A pair of Empire carved mahogany pier tables by Jacob, Paris, dating to between 1813 to 1825 is expected to realise £15,000-£25,000, a large William IV carved mahogany serving table attributed to Trotter *circa* 1830 carries an estimate of £12,000-£18,000, and a William IV carved mahogany wine cooler attributed to Gillows, *circa* 1835, is estimated to realise £4,000-£6,000.



FASQUE AND THE GLADSTONE FAMILY

Sir John Gladstone (1764-1851) purchased Fasque in 1830 for the princely sum of £80,000 from Sir Alexander Ramsay, Bt., who had built the grand new palace but had ruined himself in the process. The son of a prosperous Leith merchant, Sir John had migrated to Liverpool and established its Corn Exchange which fed the massive population of Lancashire, hotbed of the Industrial Revolution. Having made his fortune trading corn, cotton and sugar, and been served as M.P. for Lancaster, Sir John began to look for a Scottish Estate and soon found Fasque.

Sir John set about furnishing Fasque, acquiring furniture, carpets, books, sculpture, porcelain, pictures, silver and ornaments with no expense spared. In 1831 his youngest son William left Oxford University and set off on the Grand Tour, possibly acquiring some of the Old Masters in the collection, before being first elected to parliament in 1832 and going on to serve as Prime Minister to Queen Victoria four times between 1868 and 1894. William Gladstone (1809-1898) loved Fasque and spent much time there, especially before his marriage in 1839, after which his principle residence became Hawarden Castle in Wales, the ancestral home of his wife. He reserved a turret room at Fasque for his political and intellectual pursuits and added a range of objects, books and manuscripts to the house's collection.

Sir John's eldest son Thomas (1804-1889) inherited the baronetcy in 1851, together with the house and Estate. Thomas was survived by two children, John and Mary, who lived to a ripe old age in the house as bachelor and spinster with a large team of servants. John served in the Coldstream Guards at the battle of Tel el Kebir, and introduced a substantial selection of militaria to the house, and many fine books on plants and birds. The Queen Mother visited Fasque several times in her later years, and reminisced about the good old days when she was a guest of John and Mary in the "great white house" before the First World War.

John was succeeded in the baronetcy by a contemporary cousin, and left the Estate to the next in line, Albert, the oldest surviving grandson of William. For the second generation the house was owned by a bachelor. Not until the 1930s could Albert afford to live at Fasque for any extended period; and his residence was brought to a halt by the outbreak of the war in 1939.

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Images available on request
Visit Christie's at www.christies.com

- *Fasque – The Scottish seat of the Gladstones* will be on public view at Christie's, 8 King Street, St. James's, London SW1Y 6QT from 1st to 2nd and 6th to 7th May 2008. For general enquiries, contact Christie's on +44 (0)207 839 9060 or visit www.christies.com