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CHRISTIE'S COUNTRY HOUSE SALE IN WALES

**Works of Art from Private Family Collection at Chirk Castle
Offers Exciting Opportunity for Collectors**

Chirk Castle

Christie's Country House Sale

21 June 2004

London – On 21 June 2004, Christie's will stage a classic Country House Sale of works of art and household objects from the private collection of the Myddelton family at Chirk Castle, Wrexham, Wales. The superb auction will comprise a diverse selection of over five hundred objects from the family wing at the Castle, the majority never seen by the public before. Highlights will include furniture, paintings, ceramics, books and silver as well as antique household effects.

"After long discussions, we have decided with sadness to leave our private apartment at Chirk Castle. The Myddelton family has had an unbroken connection with the property since 1595 so this has not been an easy decision," said Guy Myddelton. *"The National Trust who run Chirk Castle very effectively now welcome around 80,000 visitors a year. While we are pleased that so many people come to visit and enjoy the Castle and its grounds, it has become too busy an environment to bring up our young children. We will not be able to take all our belongings with us to our new home, hence we have instructed Christie's to stage this sale in June."*

"We are confident that this auction will not only provide an opportunity to introduce the rich history of Chirk Castle to a wider audience but will also give collectors, both private and institutional, a fantastic opportunity to acquire fine works of art and household mementos", said Richard Roundell, Vice-Chairman of Christie's UK and Representative of Christie's in Wales.

The Country House Sale will offer collectors superb works of art as well as antique household objects. Furniture will include both 17th century oak examples as well as 18th and 19th century Georgian and Victorian pieces. Highlights will include a George III mahogany serving-table (estimate in the region of £80,000) and a set of four George III mahogany hall chairs attributed to Mayhew & Ince (estimate in the region of £20,000). Dating to the period when A.W.N. Pugin was involved in the remodelling of Chirk are a pair of early Victorian cast-iron and brass andirons, from a design attributed to Pugin, probably produced by John Hardman & Co., Birmingham (estimate in

the region of £10,000). A pair of Victorian oak benches, also probably designed by A.W.N. Pugin will also be offered (estimate in the region of £8,000).

Further highlights range from four volumes entitled a collection of Etruscan, Greek and Roman antiquities from the Cabinet of the Hon. William Hamilton, Naples (1766-67) (estimate: £20,000-30,000) to a locomotive plate inscribed 'Chirk Castle' (estimate in the region of £15,000). Paintings in the sale will range from Old Masters to a small selection of portraits.

Unique and appealing antique household objects will include collections of falconry tackle, hunting horns and Yeomanry swords. A collection of tack, including black-painted iron tack supports, a collection of leather bits and various saddles will be include (estimate in the region of £1,000), a collection of 18th century leather fire buckets with family initials (estimate in the region of £1,000) and a collection of Georgian men's costume (estimate in the region of £200) will also be included in the sale.

The contents of the sale will be on exhibition in situ in the private family wing at the Castle from 18 June. The sale will take place in a marquee near Chirk Castle on 21 June 2004. The auction is expected to realise in the region of £1 million.

Chirk is one of a chain of border castles which were constructed in the late 13th century to maintain the conquests of Edward I in Wales. It was built by Roger Mortimer who had been granted the lordship in 1282. Its rectangular plan resembles that of contemporary royal Castles, achieving great strength from drum towers which project out far into the field. The estate passed from the Mortimers to the Earls of Arundel, and then to the Lancastrians, the Beauforts and the Yorkists, emerging from the Wars of the Roses in the hands of Sir William Stanley. From 1495 until 1563, the Tudors administered Chirk. It was then granted to the Earl of Leicester. Finally in 1595, the Castle was purchased by the Elizabethan merchant adventurer Thomas Myddelton.

Chirk Castle has been a National Trust Property since 1981 and is open to the public. The core collection of furniture and works of art remains on display in the public wing of the Castle.

Although the Myddelton family will no longer be living at the castle they hope to retain one of the towers for occasional use.

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Images available on request

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