

For Immediate Release

31 March 2005

Contact Zoë Schoon 020.7752.3121 zschoon@christies.com

CHRISTIE'S PAYS TRIBUTE TO THE DARLING OF THE SEAS

Maritime

Wednesday, 25 May 2005 at 10.30am

South Kensington – Momentous historical events of the seas will be represented in Christie's South Kensington's first **Maritime** sale of the year on 25 May 2005. From the 1801 Battle of Copenhagen to the sinking of the Bismarck in 1941 and beyond, this historical sale offers a vast array of commemorative wares, paintings, books, watercolours, prints and models. With estimates ranging from £200 to £40,000, there is something for everyone from the most dedicated collectors, to those simply wanting to own their very own piece of maritime history.

Amongst sale highlights includes an oval green and white meat dish from the tragic steamer the P S Forefarshire (estimate: £1,000 – 1,500). The subject of one of the most dramatic sea rescues in history, she was wrecked off the coast of Northumberland in September 1838 in some of the worst weather ever known in the region. Having survived for most of the day on just one boiler, she finally succumbed to the waves at around 3.45am, resulting in the loss of 45 of the 63 passengers on board. However, it was 23 year-old Grace Darling who shot to fame by insisting that both she and her father, a lighthouse keeper, braved the waves in their small boat to rescue the survivors. Together they rowed through the perilously high waves making two trips to save the remaining passengers who were clinging to the wreck as it floundered on the rocks. As a result 9 people owed their lives to the Darlings and young Grace quickly became the toast of society receiving gifts and medals for her bravery. Generations to come were told of her heroic story. Sadly however, she did not live long to enjoy her fame dying of tuberculosis in October 1842.

Also of interest in this sale is a rare red Ensign from the royal yacht Victoria & Albert II (estimate: £500 – 800). Commissioned in March 1855 the second royal yacht was built when it became clear that the Queen needed a bigger boat for her growing family. The yacht was used until 1901, when it was scrapped. Ensigns such as this are extremely rare, and this one is expected to attract considerable interest. Also included in the sale is a WWI Kaisermarine submarine pennant (estimate: £400 – 600). Still smelling of diesel, this pennant was flying when its host submarine was captured in the WWII. It would possibly have been a "lucky charm" kept by a crewman whose father survived had the Great War.

Other highlights of this sale include a model of HMS Exeter, which has been on loan to the Science Museum in London since 1938 (estimate: £7,000 – 9,000) and a proposal model of a ship for the French admiralty from *circa* 1730 to 1740 (estimate: £10,000 – 15,000). A pair of finely carved 18th century stern carvings will also be offered (estimate: £18,000-25,000). These originally would have been located on the transom board of a small naval ship and their carvings suggest they are probably English and date from 1680 – 1710. Any surviving naval carving of this period is rare, and matched pairs such as these are rarer still.

###

Images available on request

Visit Christie's Web site at www.christies.com

Notes to Editors:

Christie's is the world market leader in the fields of *Maritime Pictures* and *Maritime Collectibles*. Sales are held every year in Spring and Autumn in both London and New York featuring oil paintings, watercolours and prints, as well as ship's fittings, carvings and figureheads, instruments, models and ephemera. World auction records established by Christie's include £663,750 for *A 1:48 scale-gun navy board model of an unrigged English two-deck Fifth Rate, circa.1710-1724* (November 2003) and £172,000 for John Wilson Carmichael's *A sleek-bulled British Opium Schooner amongst other shipping, including fine-lined Chinese deep water junks and a large British man-o'-war under sail, off what is presumed to be Hong Kong from 1843* (November 1997). In October 2005, Christie's London will hold *The Trafalgar Sale*, which commemorates 200 years since the glorious battle.

In 2005 Christie's South Kensington will have the following opening hours:

Monday 9am – 7.30pm

Tuesday to Friday 9am to 5pm

And will be open for Weekend Shopping on:

Saturday and Sunday 10am to 4pm

The weekend openings will be throughout the year except for bank holidays.

Christie's South Kensington is the first international auction house in London to offer regular weekend auctions.

Viewing Times:

Saturday 21st May 10am – 4pm

Sunday 22nd May 10am – 4pm

Monday 23rd May 9am – 7pm

Tuesday 24th May 9am – 5pm

Wednesday 25th May 9am – 10.30am