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CHRISTIE'S CELEBRATES SILVER AT SOUTH KENSINGTON IN JULY

The James Walker Collection

13 July 2006



South Kensington - Christie's announces that they will offer the James Walker Collection on 13 July 2006. Amassed by the late Gerald ("Jimmy") Sanders (1911-1982), a founding member and former Secretary of the Silver Society, this diverse collection includes 58 pieces of Channel Islands silver, principally from the 18th century, as well as a variety of inscribed pieces covering subjects as varied as archery, shipwrecks, railway accidents and the rescue of a lady friend of the Prince of Wales (later George IV) from the French Revolution. The collection is estimated to fetch in excess of £300,000.

Amongst the earliest pieces in the section of Channel Island silver is a Jersey wine cup by Abraham Hebert of Jersey, *circa* 1684/1700 (estimate: £4,000-5,000) and a porringer by Robert Barbedor, *circa* 1700, who originated from St Malo, France and worked in both Jersey and Guernsey (estimate: £2,500-3,500). Of special local interest is a Jersey Militia prize spoon dated 1804 and won by Jean Lorans (estimate: £300-400, together with two other spoons) and a rare and beautiful Guernsey ladle formed from a silver-mounted cowrie shell by the most famous Guernsey silversmith, Guillaume Henry, *circa* 1730, inscribed to Jean Arnel (estimate: £700-1,000).

Of particular local interest, especially to those with an interest in genealogy, are a large number of christening cups including one of the earlier pieces in the collection, a Jersey christening cup *circa* 1700 by G.S (estimate: £1,500-2,500) and a christening cup by I. H of Guernsey inscribed to "D.M.Q" from his or her god-mother, Judith Simon in 1781, (estimate: £700-900). In typical Channel Islands fashion, almost all of these bear initials of the recipients usually together with French inscriptions bearing the details of the infant and their God-parents or grand-parents. In some cases there are full family names inscribed and, more importantly, the dates on which they were given.

Elsewhere in the collection are some notable Victorian novelty pieces and a collection of badges, both civil & military, which combine to provide a fascinating insight into English social history. Highlighting this section is an extremely rare Victorian silver-mounted glass novelty kangaroo claret jug, mark of Sampson Mordan, London, 1882 (estimate: £15,000-20,000).

Another highlight is a George II silver mug with later decoration, mark of John Fossey, London, 1739 (estimate: £300-500) with an inscription that reads '*This cup with a purse of 25 sovereigns was subscribed for in Cheltenham and presented to Mr. Henry Wilkinson in acknowledgement of his courage and presence of mind in saving the lives of a large number of passengers on the St. German Western Railway on the 8 July 1851*'. The train in question left Cheltenham at 7.30am on 8 July, and picked up extra carriages and passengers at Gloucester and Stroud. Travelling between Stroud and Tetbury with 23 carriages and 1,200 passengers, it entered a tunnel but, as the locomotive exited from the other end, the driver realised that 12 carriages were missing due to the breaking away of a grappling hook. Knowing that a mail-train was due to follow on the same line at any moment, many of the passengers panicked and jumped from the train in terror. Henry Wilkinson was instrumental in rescuing the runaway carriages, averting certain disaster and saving the lives of many. This cup with a purse of 25 pounds were the reward for his courage.

In 1978, a selection of the James Walker Collection was exhibited at the Guernsey Museum and Art Gallery. Many of the pieces are illustrated in the leading books on Channel Islands silver, namely "Old Channel Islands Silver, its makers and marks" by Richard H. Mayne, 1969 and, more recently, "Silver in the Channel Islands" by Frederick Cohen and Nicholas Du Quesne Bird.

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Images available on request

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