

For Immediate Release

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UNRECORDED COLLECTION OF SCOTTISH POTTERY TO BE OFFERED AT CHRISTIE'S THIS AUTUMN

**From Glasgow to South East Asia and Beyond
The Edwin Robertson Collection of Bell Export Pottery
Christie's South Kensington
27 September 2007 at 10.30am**



London – A unique single-owner collection of previously unknown and unrecorded decorative late 19th century Scottish export pottery will be offered for the first time in *From Glasgow to South East Asia and Beyond: The Edwin Robertson Collection of Bell Export Pottery* at Christie's South Kensington on 27 September 2007. Produced by J&MP Bell & Co. of Glasgow specifically for the Far East and South East Asian markets, these vibrant sponged and printed wares were produced in a myriad of different patterns and colours. Gathered over four years by collector Edwin Robertson while working on a water supply project in Indonesia, the collection of over 150 lots will be sold to benefit the charity WaterAid. The sale provides a superb opportunity to acquire unique and decorative china for your home. Estimates start from £150 up to £700 and the sale is estimated to realise in excess of £30,000 for charity.

Glasgow based J&MP Bell & Co, known locally as 'Bells', exported to the Far East and South East Asian markets between 1881 and 1906 with their lively multi-coloured pottery.



Thirty different patterns were produced in eight different colours, with some transfer prints employing two colours, on a mixture of domestic earthenware, including Scottish pudding bowls which then became rice bowls in Asia. The bold designs were different to what other manufacturers of the day were producing with fabulous birds, butterflies and decorative flowers appearing alongside exotic fruits, peacocks, mythical creatures and even ships. Locations such as Peking's 'Forbidden City' featured as well as new interpretations of traditional and mythological Chinese designs such as the willow pattern. All the more extraordinary is that these patterns were created by designers based in Glasgow who are thought unlikely to have ever travelled abroad to these distant lands.



Each pattern was given a name ranging from *Humming Bird, Peacocks and Lilies, Sumatra, Siam or Singapore* to more unusual names that reflected the market that they were made for as in *Jobore* (see image on previous page), *Batavia* and *Malacca*. While on other occasions local names were used such as *Kembang Bintang, Burung Kupu* and *Buah Buah*.

Highlights in the sale include a selection of early experimental trial pieces which were produced in multiple colours, including *Alhambra, Malacca* and *Glasgow* patterns with estimates averaging £200-300



per plate. More unusual patterns produced in rare colour combinations include the *Jobore, Buah Buah* (meaning tropical fruits) (see illustration left) and *Kapal Basar* plates printed with sailing ships and bold graphic prints showing mythical dragons and birds, named in their native languages. The plates remain a great technical and decorative achievement for the Scottish pottery industry at the turn of the century.

This wonderful collection was started by chance by Edwin Robertson who on being posted to Indonesia came upon these unusual designs by J&MP Bell & Co in the local markets. However it was only during a short holiday back in Scotland when Robertson was invited to talk about his export pottery wares to the Scottish Pottery Society in 1980, that he discovered that his collection was unknown. Upon further investigation, it is thought that the company records were pulped for paper production during the Second World War. Scouring local markets over a four year period, Robertson built up his impressive and unique collection. Upon his return to Scotland, a large part of his Scottish export pottery collection was acquired by The National Museum of Scotland.



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Images available on request

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