

For Immediate Release

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CHRISTIE'S COUNTRY HOUSE SALE AT WOBURN

Offering Over 1,000 Works of Art and Objects in September Providing a Unique Opportunity for Collectors

Property from Two Ducal Collections

Christie's at Woburn, Bedfordshire

20 and 21 September 2004

London – On 20 and 21 September Christie's will stage a sale of Property from Two Ducal Collections at one of Britain's best-loved houses, Woburn Abbey, Bedfordshire. This superb auction will take place in the famous sculpture gallery, designed by Henry Holland. The sale comprises a diverse selection of over 1,000 objects, approximately one half of which have been stored in outbuildings for up to 60 years at Woburn. The other half are offered by the Executors of the Estate of the late Anne, Duchess of Westminster, principally from her property Eaton Lodge, Cheshire. This sale is the latest project of the Private Collection and Country House Sales Team and is expected to fetch in excess of £1.5 million.

"Designed as a Temple to Antiquity, the Sculpture Gallery at Woburn could not be a more evocative place to hold an 'attic' sale. Reflecting the tastes and passions of two great Ducal Houses, the sale at Woburn embraces everything from automats to Old Masters, crèche figures to fishing tackle and country house lighting to Henry Holland furniture. With the vast majority of lots valued at a few hundred pounds, this is a unique opportunity for Country House enthusiasts to enjoy the perfect day out at Woburn – and bring home a souvenir," said Orlando Rock, Director of Christie's Collections Department.

The Woburn part of this auction will offer approximately 600 objects, which, in the main, were stored in the Chair store, Dairy and North Court at Woburn. Untouched, and barely seen for over a generation, the auction will give collectors an unrivalled opportunity to acquire furniture, paintings, works of art and textiles with the most impeccable provenance. The auction will be staged in the magnificent Sculpture Gallery, originally designed as a greenhouse by Henry Holland in 1801-2 and then converted into a sculpture gallery by Sir Jeffrey Wyattville in 1820.

The Trustees of the Bedford Estates have recently reviewed items that have been in store in outbuildings at Woburn, many since the early 20th century. In 1950 the East Wing of the Abbey was demolished, including a series of State Rooms and the indoor Riding School and the real tennis court. Inevitably a great deal of furniture, pictures and objects became redundant and were put into store. The Trustees have undertaken a programme of careful examination of each object, seeking advice on restoration where needed, and suitability for returning the most important pieces to the core collection of works at the Abbey.

None of the pieces selected for auction form part of the core collection at Woburn. The funds raised from the auction will be used toward the costs of restoring some of the more important, and previously stored, objects so that they can be displayed at the Abbey, as well as to assist an ongoing programme of restoration.

Among the individual highlights to be offered is a group of furniture almost certainly designed by Henry Holland, the architect of many of the great rooms, including the magnificent Sculpture Gallery at Woburn. The majority of the Henry Holland pieces to be offered were commissioned for rooms which were demolished in 1950. These include a set of eleven Regency mahogany dining chairs (estimate: £12,000-18,000), A set of three Regency giltwood pelmets (estimate: £5,000-8,000) and a Regency pale grey-painted daybed, upholstered in striped silk (estimate: £4,000-6,000). A George IV mahogany library folio cabinet by R&J Newton is a fine example of Greek revival furniture (estimate: £20,000-40,000). It was produced some 20 years later than the celebrated bibliophile 'folio' cabinets designed by Henry Holland which remain in the core collection.

A number of pieces of 18th and 19th century furniture, which were painted in the fashionable French taste of white and gold as part of the preparations for Queen Victoria and Prince Albert's visit to Woburn in 1841, feature. Highlights include a late Regency cream and pale blue-painted and parcel gilt mahogany side cabinet (estimate: £2,500-4,000) and a pair of late Regency white-painted and parcel-gilt mahogany bookcases, possibly designed by Henry Holland (estimate: £6,000-10,000)

The auction will also feature a number of pieces introduced in the mid-18th century under the guidance of Henry Flitcroft, the architect chosen by the 4th Duke to continue works at the Abbey. Highlights include a George III mahogany dining table attributed to Gillows (estimate: £60,000-100,000) and a George II giltwood mirror, attributable to Whittle and Norman (estimate: £8,000-12,000).

The Bedford family have a long association with horse racing and breeding. The Fifth Duke bred and raced three Derby winners, while the present day Duke of Bedford is a director of Tattersalls, Europe's leading Thoroughbred Auctioneers, and Newmarket Racecourse. Reflecting this association,

an oil on panel by the celebrated British equestrian painter, Sir Alfred James Munnings PRA, *Pond Wood, Fingringhoe Hall* (estimate: £10,000-15,000) will be offered in the auction.

A number of late George III plaster sculptures of groups of cattle, by George Garrard, will be offered, and reflect the family's heritage as celebrated breeders of cattle in the 18th century. Two George III patinated plaster on wire models of groups of bulls, cows and calves (estimate: £2,000-4,000 each), and a model of two stags (estimate: £1,000-3,000) are included. Books are represented by a number of volumes of the hand-coloured plate books, *Birds of Australia*, by George Matthews, London (estimate: £7,000-10,000)

A group of Spanish provincial terracotta figures will be offered, which were probably acquired by Lord George William Russell (1790-1846), son of the 6th Duke, on his travels in the Iberian Peninsula. Eight figures representing regional dance and ten figures representing bullfighting, as well as figures of flamenco dancers, shepherds, wine sellers, agricultural pursuits and a milking scene feature, with estimates ranging from £500 to £5,000.

The auction will also offer an evocative collections of toys, Chinese wallpapers, screens, curtains and bolts of fabric, as well as porcelain, silver, picture frames, prints and oils. Appealing antique pieces include a late Victorian mahogany five-octave organ (estimate: £300-500) and a clockwork automaton figure of a female Moorish mandolin player (estimate: £6,000-8,000). Country house lighting also features, including wonderful late Regency bronze and ormolu oil-lamp bases from the 'Lamp Room'.

Christie's is delighted to have been instructed to sell items from the estate of the late Anne, Duchess of Westminster, who died last year, in order to raise funds for her charitable trust. Christie's is staging the auction of both properties at Woburn in order to best present the works from these two great English Ducal Collections, which share many synergies. In the region of 550 items, including pictures, furniture and household effects will be offered from her residences, Eaton Lodge, Chester, and that at Achfary, near Lairg, Sutherland, Scotland, to raise funds for the late Duchess's charitable trust. A limited number of items from other members of the Grosvenor Family will also be included in the sale.

Reflecting the Westminster family's formidable successes in the world of horse racing and breeding, a number of paintings with a racing connection are offered. Highlights include the famous painting by Francis Calcraft Turner, *Cardinal Puff winning The Tradesman's Plate at Chester Races* (estimate: £20,000-£30,000) and a painting after Frederick Herring, Senior, *A trial race between two of Lord Grosvenor's racehorses* (estimate: £2,500-£4,000). A number of watercolours by Edward Lear feature; *Campana di Roma, Crescenza* (estimate: £5,000-£8,000), *Syracuse, Sicily*, 1882 (estimate: £7,000-£10,000), and *Karytena, Greece*, dated 1849 (estimate: £7,000-£10,000). Offered from her house in Sutherland are

several superb works on paper by Sir Edwin Henry Landseer, R.A., *Stags Rutting*, dated 1884 (estimate: £8,000 - £12,000) and *Study of deer's heads* (estimate: £5,000 - £8,000).

Furniture from Eaton Lodge includes a William and Mary 'country-made' walnut chest (estimate: £2,500-£4,000), two Italian Kingwood serpentine corner cupboards (estimate: £6,000-£9,000). Also offered is a Viennese stained wood jewel cabinet inset with enamel plaques (estimate: £3,000-£5,000) and a George III satinwood side table (estimate: £5,000-£8,000). Included in the porcelain section of the sale is a superb Meissen armorial skillet, cover and stand decorated with the Arms of Augustine III, King of Poland and Elector of Saxony (estimate: £40,000 - £60,000).

A highly desirable collection of jewellery and watches that belonged to Her Grace features in the sale. Highlights include a slim dress pocket watch signed 'Cartier' (estimate: £2,000-£3,000), a gold pair cased lever calendar watch by Breguet, *circa* 1825 (estimate: £5,000-£8,000), a graduated three row cultured pearl necklace with and an old-cut diamond set cluster clasp (estimate: £1,000-£1,500) and a mid-Victorian diamond and pearl tiara, *circa* 1840 (estimate: £3,000-£5,000).

From Achfary Lodge comes a Clarice Cliff dinner service with designs by Dame Laura Knight, *circa* 1934, featuring circus performers (estimate: £15,000-£20,000), a Sèvres quatrefoil dish (estimate: £3,000-£5,000), a pair of George IV silver wine coasters (estimate: £5,000-£8,000) and a collection of copper and brass kitchen ware, including a fish kettle, the majority engraved with initial and coronet (estimate: £1,500-£2,500). Coffee pots, tea caddies, mustard pots, jelly moulds and a Maiolica strawberry set are also among the collectible antique objects on offer.

The Duchess was well known as one of the most popular and successful Post War National Hunt racehorse owners; in particular as the owner of Arkle, the legendary winner of three Cheltenham Gold Cups and many other notable races and arguably the most famous National Hunt racehorse of all time. Included in the sale are some 20 lots of Arkle memorabilia including paintings, drawings by Peter Beagle including *Cruising Home, Cheltenham* (estimate: £2,500-£4,000) and *Arkle surrounded by pigeons* (estimate: £1,500-£2,500) and Lionel Edwards, *Arkle with Pat Taffe up, Mill House behind* (estimate: £3,000-£4,000), models, prints, racing silks, books and even a half bottle of 1853 Hennessey cognac presented to the Duchess to celebrate Arkle's victory in the Hennessey Gold Cup.

Notes to Editors

Woburn Abbey lies at the heart of an Estate whose activities are many and varied. The world class, and award winning, attraction of Woburn Safari Park, which receives over 400,000 visitors each year and plays a vital role in the breeding of species of endangered animals. The Père David species of deer, which originated in China, is one such success story. They were saved from extinction by Herbrand, 11th Duke, in the 1890s and 95 years later his great grandson, Robin the 14th Duke of

Bedford, donated 40 deer to the Chinese Government, and they have adapted successfully to their old home, now boasting a population of over 400 spread throughout ten different sites in China. Further visitor attractions include the Woburn Abbey Antiques Centre which is probably the largest centre outside London. The Woburn Golf and Country Club, whose three championship courses all feature in the top 75 in the UK according to Golf Magazine, is the venue for the Heritage Tournament which will take place on the Marquess course between 23-26 September 2004. For more information visit Woburn's website www.woburnabbey.co.uk.

Press View

Thursday 16 September

Public View

The pre-auction exhibition will be on public view at Woburn from 17-19 September

Catalogue

An illustrated catalogue will be available approximately 4-5 weeks before the sale. Please telephone 020 7389 2820 for further details.

Auction

20 and 21 September, in the Sculpture Gallery at Woburn, Bedfordshire

This auction is being staged by the Private Collection and Country House Sale department, whose recent successes have included the sale of a unique pieces from the collection of Axel Vervoordt in situ at his Castle van 's-Gravenwezel outside Antwerp and the Chirk Castle sale in June 2004.

Christie's Collections Sales

Since its foundation in 1766, Christie's has traditionally held the most significant and successful Private Collection and House sales including two previous Bedford sales in 1800 and 1827.

From the jewels of Madame du Barry in 1793 through forty days of the Stowe sale in 1848, to more recent triumphs for Cecil Beaton, Marilyn Monroe, Rudolph Nureyev, the Viennese Rothschilds, Hubert de Givenchy, Christopher Gibbs and Axel Vervoordt, these sales have embraced all fields, tastes and artistic endeavours. The love affair that is 'collecting' - the magic of the objects, the evocative romance of past times and the styles of their owners - are at the heart of Collection Sales, which continue to fascinate and inspire.

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Images available on Request

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