

**For Immediate Release**

6 October 2008

Contact: Hannah Schmidt +44 (0)207 389 2964  
Matthew Paton +44 (0)207 389 2965

[hschmidt@christies.com](mailto:hschmidt@christies.com)  
[mpaton@christies.com](mailto:mpaton@christies.com)

**CHAIN OF OFFICE GIVEN TO ONE OF  
HENRY VIII'S CLOSEST ADVISORS  
TO BE OFFERED AT CHRISTIE'S IN NOVEMBER**



**IMPORTANT EARLY EUROPEAN FURNITURE, SCULPTURE AND TAPESTRIES  
6 November 2008, London**

**London** – Christie's announce that they will offer *The Coleridge Collar*, one of the most important surviving relics of the Tudor age, at the auction of *Important European Furniture, Sculpture and Tapestries* on 6 November 2008 in London. The only known, complete surviving collar of office from the time of Henry VIII, it is thought to have been gifted personally by the King to Sir Edward Montagu (*circa* 1485-1557), Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, member of the Privy Council, executor of the King's will and governor to his son and heir, King Edward VI. An extremely rare survival of Renaissance English goldsmith-work, the collar was made *circa* 1546-47, at the time that Michelangelo was appointed chief architect of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Strikingly similar to the example worn by Sir Thomas More in Hans Holbein the Younger's famous portrait, it is expected to realise £200,000 to £300,000.

**Andreas Pampoulides, Director and co-head of Sale at Christie's London:** "*The Coleridge Collar is an extraordinary and fascinating piece of history, both as a work of art, and also as a rare Tudor relic. An extremely rare example of early English goldsmith-work, the collar also represents the only known, complete, surviving collar of office from the time of Henry VIII, one of the most renowned of European monarchs. We are thrilled to be able to exhibit The Coleridge Collar at Christie's rooms from 2 to 5 November, and to offer it to international collectors and institutions at the auction on 6 November.*"

Livery collars first gained great prominence when they were used by Henry IV (1367-1413) as an official symbol of allegiance to the monarch. At the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, he declared that all the sons of the king, dukes, earls, barons and baronets may wear the livery, with the metal used for the collars signifying the status of the wearer. While the Lancaster kings used the motif of the esses (S), the subsequent Yorkist kings used suns and roses. The Tudor dynasty revived the esses (S), and also began to incorporate portcullises and the Tudor rose, as seen on the present example. The meaning of the esses is not known for certain; different theories have suggested that it could represent 'sanctedat, saviensa, sapienca and seynoria' (sanctity, wisdom, learning and lordship); that it could be inspired by the mother of John of Gaunt who had decorated her chamber with the motif; or that it represented *Spiritus Sanctus* and, by extension, the seven gifts that the Holy Spirit bestowed upon man; wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, fortitude, piety and fear (of God).

Henry VIII (1491-1547) is one of the most renowned and recognized monarchs in European history. He separated the English church from Roman authority, ordered the execution of two of his six wives and ruled England with a forceful and opinionated manner. Henry surrounded himself throughout his life with a loyal following, many of whom were fated to execution if they fell out of favour. The members of his closest council wore gold livery collars in recognition of their standing and importance, and these collars would be passed onto a successor to any particular office within the council for a traditional fee.

The present collar has been subject to scientific analysis which dates the gold to between 1545 and 1551, and is thought to have been given personally to Sir Edward Montagu by King Henry VIII in 1546 on his appointment to the role of Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas. Sir Edward was a member of the Privy Council, governor to Henry's son and heir Edward VI, and one of 16 executors of the King's will. The collar was worn by Sir Edward's successors to the role of Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas until Lord Coleridge merged the office with the post of Lord Chief Justice of the Queen's bench in 1880, at which point the role became known as Lord Chief Justice of England. As this point, the collar became superfluous and became the personal property of Lord Coleridge. It passed by family descent and has changed ownership only once since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

\* the painting illustrated at the top of the press release is a portrait of Sir Edward Montagu from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, today in the collection of the Duke of Buccleuch now housed at Boughton House, Northamptonshire.

###

*Images available on request*  
*Visit Christie's Web site at [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com)*

**About Christie's**

Christie's is the world's leading art business with global art sales in 2007 that totaled £3.1 billion/\$6.3 billion. This marks the highest total in company and in art auction history. For the first half of 2008, art sales totaled £1.8 billion / \$3.5 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 600 sales annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$80 million. Christie's has 85 offices in 43 countries and 14 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Tel Aviv, Dubai, Hong Kong and Zurich. Most recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging and new markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

\*Estimates do not include buyer's premium