

For Immediate Release

17 August 2011

Contact: Matthew Paton mpaton@christies.com +44 207 389 2965

CHRISTIE'S TO HOLD THE LARGEST COUNTRY HOUSE SALE OF THE YEAR AT COWDRAY PARK, WEST SUSSEX ON 13, 14 AND 15 SEPTEMBER

**Works of art from Cowdray Park to be offered alongside property
from Dunecht House, Scottish home of Lord Cowdray's brother, the
Hon. Charles Pearson, at the largest and most important
country house sale of the year**



London – Christie's will present a three day country house auction at Cowdray Park, West Sussex, on 13, 14 and 15 September 2011. The sale will offer approximately 1,200 lots from both Cowdray Park, home of Lord Cowdray (*above left*), and from Dunecht House, the Scottish home of Lord Cowdray's brother, the Hon. Charles Pearson (*above right*). Estimates range from £50 to £500,000 and the auction is expected to realise in the region of £5 million.

The auction follows sales at Christie's in London in July when a selection of nine works from Cowdray Park were sold for a collective total of £10,974,000, led by Thomas Gainsborough's full-length portrait of Mrs William Villebois which sold for £6,537,250, a world record price for the artist at auction.

Andrew Waters, Head of Private Collection and Country House Sales, Christie's: *"This historic three day country house auction follows Christie's long tradition of offering the finest British collections. Weetman Pearson, 1st Viscount Cowdray and his wife Annie, Lady Cowdray were among the most prolific and discerning British collectors of the early 20th century, coupling their considerable wealth with a taste for beautiful pictures, objects and works of art. Following the success of the sales in July, when nine works were sold for a total of £11 million, Christie's are looking forward to opening the doors of Cowdray Park to the public for the first time, providing collectors an accessible opportunity to acquire works of art from the Pearson Collections."*



Many of the works to be offered from the collections were acquired by Weetman Dickinson Pearson (1856-1927), the first Viscount Cowdray, and his son, Weetman Harold Miller Pearson, the 2nd Viscount. Weetman Pearson, 1st Viscount Cowdray, developed his family firm, S. Pearson and Son Ltd., from a small company in Bradford into one of the most successful business empires of the 20th century. In 1889 he won the contract to drain Mexico City by means of a Grand Canal and, having gained the friendship of President Porfirio Diàz, Pearson developed vast oil fields in Mexico. His firm became one of the largest construction companies in the world and together with his oil interests, he accrued extraordinary wealth. He was for ten years the Liberal Member of Parliament for Colchester, and due to his regular absences from the Houses of Commons, was often referred to in jest as 'the Member for Mexico'. Weetman Pearson acquired Cowdray Park in 1909. On his death in 1927, an American newspaper described him as 'one of the greatest pioneers ever sent out of Britain'. Pearson PLC exists today as a global media and education company and the largest book publisher in the world.

The auction in September will offer works from Cowdray Park, as well as property from Dunecht House, the Scottish home of Lord Cowdray's brother, the Hon. Charles Pearson. It will present a diverse and fascinating selection of furniture and works of art, silver, old master paintings, tapestries, arms and armour, European porcelain and glass, textiles, books and manuscripts, clocks, carpets and Chinese works of art and porcelain.

The pictures that are to be offered in the sale range from works from the Elizabethan and Jacobean era through to the 20th century. Highlights include a magnificent early 17th century portrait of a lady identified as Queen Elizabeth I but more probably Catherine Carey, Countess of Nottingham, full-length in an extraordinarily richly embroidered dress (estimate:



£250,000 to £350,000); *Portrait of Anne, Viscountess Pollington, later Countess of Mexborough (d. 1870), with her son, John Charles (1810-99), later 4th Earl of Mexborough* by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A (1769-1830) (estimate: £300,000 to £500,000); *The Red Ruin* by James Ferrier Pryde (1866-1941), commissioned by Annie, later 1st Viscountess Cowdray and one of five paintings by the artist to be



included in the sale (estimate: £80,000 to £120,000); and a beautifully preserved pair of portraits by Cornelis Jonson van Ceulen (1593-1661) of Willem and Maria Thielen (estimate: £50,000 to £80,000 each). *Self-portrait: hand and gloves resting on cane*, by the celebrated Irish artist Sir William Orpen, R.A., R.H.A. (1878-1931) will be offered with an estimate of £150,000 to £250,000. It was purchased directly from the artist by Mrs Gertrude Kinnell as a gift for her sister Annie, 1st Viscountess Cowdray, 1927.

Other highlights include two George V silver twelve-light chandeliers by Turton and Co. Ltd., London, 1920, which are copies of the chandelier made by George Garthorne for King William III *circa* 1690. They will be sold individually with an estimate of £30,000 to £50,000. A striking suit of armour made in Germany in the early 16th century is expected to realise



£20,000 to £30,000. A George V silver table from 'The Mexican Silver Suite', made by Richard and Charles Comyns, London, 1921, carries an estimate of £15,000 to £25,000. Almost certainly commissioned by Weetman Harold Miller Pearson, 2nd Viscount Cowdray, (1882-1933) soon after he inherited Cowdray Park in April 1919, but before he succeeded his father as 2nd Viscount in 1927, the table (along with other pieces from the Silver Bedroom) is a direct copy of the silver furniture made in the late 17th century for Frances Cranfield, Countess of Dorset at Knole Park, Kent. An Elizabethan Revival Oak Four-Poster Bed, *circa* 1920, is expected to realise £10,000 to £15,000 and a

superb Chinese white jade 'Prunus' vase from the 18th century is expected to realise £80,000 to £120,000. The auction will also offer the Dunecht House firefighting equipment including three red-painted fire wagons by Merryweather & Sons, London, from the late 19th century (each estimated to realise £1,500 to £2,000) and a set of 11 fire helmets and axes (estimate: £1,500 to £2,500).



###

Images available on request
 Visit Christie's Web site at www.christies.com