

ANTIQUES TRADE gazette THE ART MARKET WEEKLY

STRIKING IT RICH IN SOMERSET

An extraordinary vesta collection and a host of highlights from five days at Lawrences

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Assay Office crackdown on illegal silver

Plate committee to increase surveillance of market to locate suspect antique items

by Laura Chesters & Roland Arkell

The London Assay Office (LAO) is to launch a crackdown on what it says is a rise in illegal antique silver being offered for sale.

In conjunction with The Antique Plate Committee (APC), the Assay Office is to publish a brochure and organise a new series of conferences on the rules surrounding hallmarks.

It is a criminal offence under the Hallmarking Act (1973) to sell items of silver with unauthorised marks or unauthorised alterations and additions.

Dr Robert Organ, deputy warden of the Goldsmiths' Company Assay Office, said: "There is less expertise in silver than there used to be in the trade. The purpose of the APC is to help the trade understand what a fake is, as it is illegal to sell these objects. We help dealers and auction houses to not

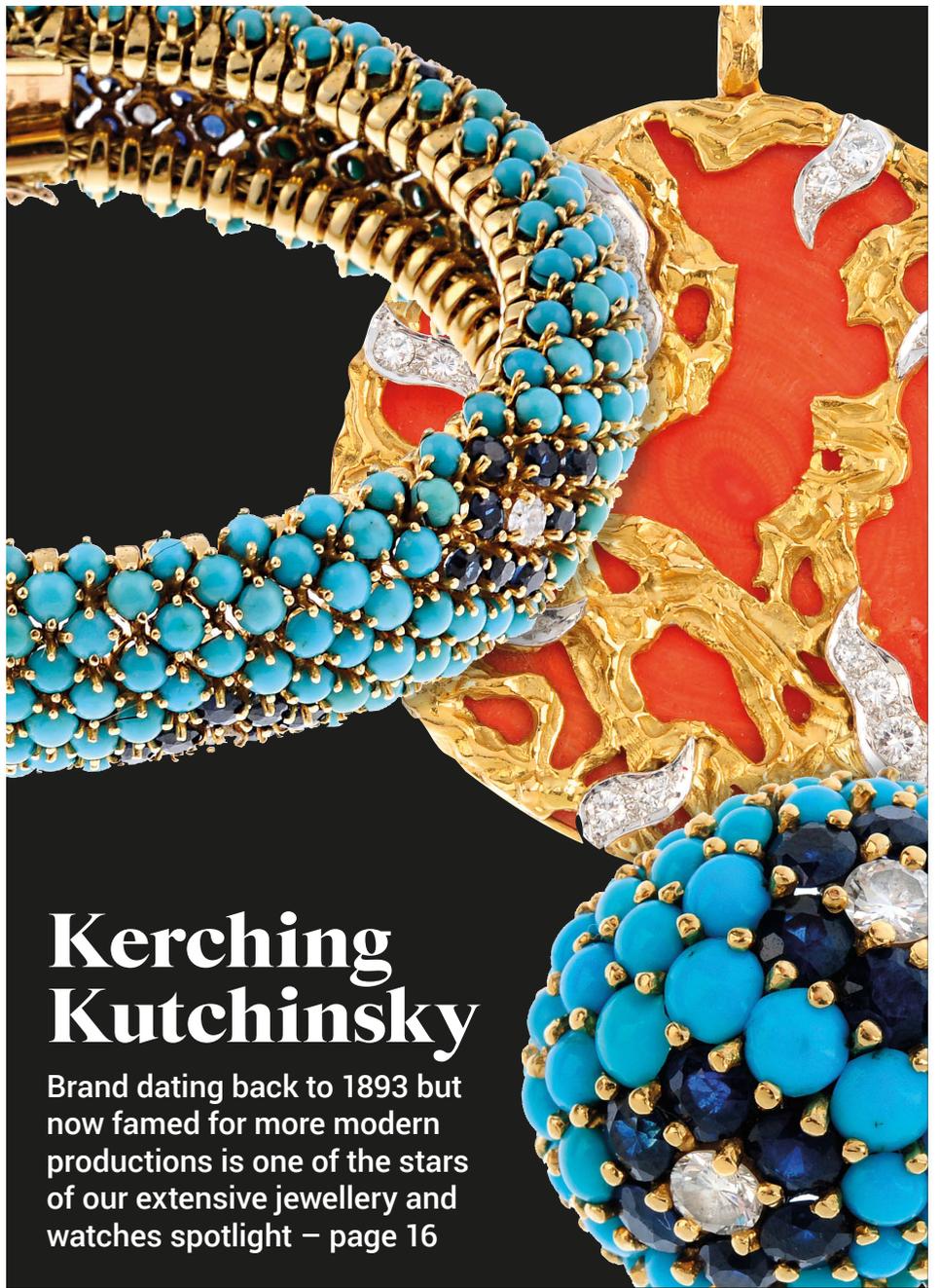
fall foul of the law. He added: "We will be much more proactive now - both in terms of educating the trade and increasing our surveillance of the market. Our activities will be increasing."

New brochure

Dealer Alastair Dickenson, a member of the APC, has penned the new brochure of guidelines that will be available before the summer. He said: "Members of the APC look through catalogues and online and if anything appears to be of a suspicious nature, it is reported to the Goldsmiths' Hall and discussed among the committee."

At least three members of the plate committee must agree an object looks suspicious before a recommendation is made to withdraw it from sale. The owner then has the option to send the item to the APC for a verdict.

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Kerching Kutchinsky

Brand dating back to 1893 but now famed for more modern productions is one of the stars of our extensive jewellery and watches spotlight – page 16

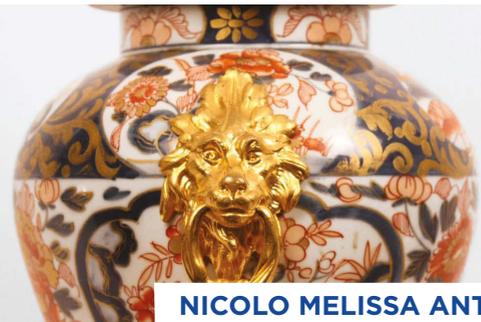
Auction Calendar the original and most authoritative listing of UK sales – page 44-51

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NICOLO MELISSA ANTIQUES



Mallett reunited with Dreweatts as Bailey plans relaunch of brand trio

by Laura Chesters

Antiques dealership Mallett and book specialist Bloomsbury are to be relaunched this year after being reunited with former stablemate Dreweatts.

Art consultancy and valuation firm Gurr Johns bought auction house Dreweatts and Bloomsbury in October and later bought the brand name of Mallett for £100,000 in December from former owner Stanley Gibbons Group.

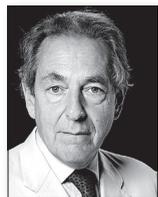
'Totally fresh start'

George Bailey, previously the chairman of Dreweatts and Bloomsbury, was brought in by Gurr Johns to run the auction house and is now working on plans to relaunch Bloomsbury and Mallett.

He told ATG: "It is a totally fresh start and a really exciting opportunity to breathe fresh



An excellent second-tier art business that serves traditional markets



life into three renowned brands and build a modern focused business which offers clients both auction and private sales.

"Bloomsbury and Mallett give us the opportunity to relaunch in specialist sections of the market."

Mallett is to be relaunched with a focus on pictures, led by James Harvey, out of Donnington Priory and viewing rooms on the first-floor office at 16-17 Pall Mall in London. Bloomsbury will launch a sales

calendar in the spring, to include specialist sales of Islamic and Western manuscripts, and is finalising a new auction location in London.

Bailey said the company is now investing in the infrastructure and systems for the companies. Gurr Johns is the majority shareholder of Dreweatts but the company is run independently.

Keen to pay down debt, Stanley Gibbons had first entered into an agreement to

sell Dreweatts and Mallett together to Mark Law's Millicent Holdings in May 2017 and Law ran the auction house for a number of weeks. However, the deal did not complete due to lack of funds (ATG No 2303).

Stanley Gibbons sold the ground-floor lease on the Pall Mall property to a fashion brand last year, with Gurr Johns taking the first floor as an office, meeting and valuation space for the Dreweatts group of brands.



Above: withdrawn from sale at Golding Young & Mawer, a 120oz silver tankard with marks for London 1696. Much of the applied decoration is later.



All appeared to have extensive later additions

Continued from front page

The latest questionable silver appeared at Golding Young & Mawer in Grantham. The lots – pulled before the sale on January 24 – included three pieces of Britannia standard silver with William III and Queen Anne marks.

A monteith, a covered tankard and a chalice all appeared to have extensive later additions. The APC had contacted the auction house about its concerns.

Lots withdrawn

Golding Young & Mawer said it had already withdrawn the lots after the vendors had a change of heart.

Colin Young, managing director of the Lincolnshire auction house, said other items potentially in breach of the Hallmarking Act had already been identified and the firm had sought permission from the vendor to submit these to the APC.

"The system is very good and the LAO is extremely helpful," said Young. "Anyone with genuine concerns over a particular lot should advise the LAO immediately and they will liaise with the auctioneer."

He added: "To aid the process it would be a common courtesy to let the auctioneer know that you have passed on your concern as an early alert."

Early longitude trials survivor up at auction

A pendulum clock used in an early longitude trial will be offered for sale by Dreweatts next month, writes Roland Arkell.

The movement (now in a later case) is thought to be one of two marine timekeepers commissioned from the clockmaker Severijn Oosterwijck (c.1637-c.1694) by the Scottish nobleman Alexander Bruce (1629-81).

Dreweatts, which will offer the clock at its March 15 sale, is reluctant to estimate its value. However, specialist Leighton Gillibrand is of the view that the Bruce-Oosterwijck timepiece is the better of the two survivors and could thus bring a six-figure sum.

Bruce, a Royalist who resided in Bremen during the Interregnum, included Dutchman Christian Huygens (inventor of the pendulum clock in 1657) and fellow

Scottish scientist Sir Robert Moray (1609-73) among his circle. The subject of pendulum timekeepers dominated their conversations.

At Bruce's expense, Oosterwijck completed the clocks – each with a distinctive wedge-shaped case – in 1662, with a third subsequently made by the London clockmaker John Hilderson. The 1663 sea trials conducted on board 'one of his Majesty's pleasure boats' by president of the newly founded Royal Society, Lord Brouncker, and Robert Hooke, produced mixed results.

By 1667, the idea of a pendulum marine timekeeper was sidelined in favour of spring-driven clocks.

What happened to these timepieces was unknown until the post-war era when, a decade or so apart, two near-identical movements emerged.

Right: the Bruce-Oosterwijck pendulum longitude timepiece.

Below: portrait of Alexander Bruce, Earl of Kincardine, by Johannes Mijtens, 1660-70.

One unsigned example found in 1974 (perhaps the movement made by Hilderson in 1663) was sold to the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, for £100,000 in 2015. This clock now on offer at Dreweatts, signed by Oosterwijck, was published by *Antiquarian Horology* in 2006, following a nine-year research project.

It was later exhibited at both the Royal Society (2013) and at the NMM as part of the 1714 Longitude Act tercentenary.

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