



## Guy Schooling

On March 4, Sworders will sell in a single-owner sale the principal contents of Boden Hall, a George III (r 1760-1820) property currently owned by Mr and Mrs Bill Wrather. Tipped off that this was a sale worth watching, *Antiques and The Arts Weekly* reached out to Guy Schooling, Sworders' chairman and head of art and antiques for some insights into the collection. He shared his thoughts via email, below.

***Congratulations on landing the Boden Hall collection. Before we talk about some of the highlights of the sale, can you bring readers up to speed on the history of the property?***

The beautiful house is George III period, with later additions, set amidst nearly 70 acres of parkland, formal gardens, lake and farmland. Our vendors purchased the property about 40 years ago and have spent the intervening years restoring and furnishing it to its current immaculate condition. The previous owner was a Mrs Johnson of the famed Johnson Tiles business in nearby Stoke on Trent. The house and outbuildings retain many marvelous tile floors installed by the family.

***Are the contents of the sale original to the house, or has the collection been assembled more recently?***

The collection has been carefully compiled by our vendor, Mrs Vicky Wrather, who for many years ran a successful interior design business.

***What else can you share about the collectors/sellers?***

The late Mr Bill Wrather was a successful property developer who collected the automobilia, which is included in the auction. Mrs Wrather was a life-long teetotal vegetarian who passionately collected teapots, most of which are also included in the auction.

***What are some of the sale highlights? Why are they noteworthy/important?***

Amongst many highlights is a glorious double portrait by Sir John Lavery (1856-1941) titled 'La Belle Mère,' which depicts his wife, Hazel and his daughter, Eileen, from his first marriage. Hazel, an American of Irish extraction, was known as "the most beautiful girl in the mid-west." The oil on canvas is estimated to realise £180/250,000.

Two works by Cornish artist Dorothea Sharp (1873-1955) include "Girls Picking Daffodils," an oil on canvas, which has an estimate of £50/70,000. There are many more delightful oil paintings and watercolor pictures at more affordable prices, together with an oil by another Cornish artist, Harold Harvey (1874-1941) estimate £30/50,000.

There are works to suit every pocket, including a collection of walking sticks, sold over about 10 lots, which are estimated from £100/300. A pair of William IV (r 1830-37) rosewood folio stands carries a £3/5,000 estimate; it is very rare to find a pair, let alone a pair in rosewood.

Bill Wrather also collected model steam engines and instruments, led by the "King William III," a 4½-inch King-class scale model steam engine and tender, in GWR livery (£4/6,000). A highlight from his automobilia collection is an early Peugeot bicycles advertising poster (£1/1,500). We are offering 45 lots of Vicky Wrather's teapots. While most of them are being sold in groups of two or more, there are a few individually offered teapots, including a teepee-form teapot and cover that was designed by Clarice Cliff for Newport Pottery (£150/250) and a Carlton ware pottery teapot modelled as a biplane (£50-£100). A full catalog description and appraisal appears in the catalog, available on our website.

***Can you talk briefly about Sworders' experience and expertise with house sales? What other estate collection sales have you managed?***

Over many years Sworders has established a reputation for offering prestigious sales of country house contents and significant collections.

The key is care, attention to detail, sensitivity, expertise in what we handle and wonderful presentation and promotion. Two years ago, we offered the remaining contents of one of East Anglia's most extraordinary and eccentric houses, Elveden Hall. On February 11, we also offered items from the attics and cellars of one of the country's leading and largest country houses Holkham Hall.

***Are there things in or about this collection that will make it stand out for you among the other estates you've handled?***

It is a beautiful, dream-like house in immaculate condition, beautifully furnished by clients with an excellent "eye."

[Editor's note: Sworders' website is [www.sworders.com](http://www.sworders.com).]

—Madelia Hickman Ring



"La Belle Mère (Portrait of the artist's wife Hazel and his daughter, Eileen)" by Sir John Lavery, RA RSA RHA (Irish, 1856-1941), oil on canvas, 1911, 128 by 90 cm (50-3/8 by 35 1/2 inches) (£180/250,000).