

Victoriana, Sports & Natural History To Lead At Sworders



A rare photograph from the funeral of Victorian explorer Dr David Livingstone (1813-1873).

STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET, UK — A rare photograph from the funeral of Victorian explorer Dr David Livingstone (1813-73) comes to auction in Essex this summer. The carte de visite, showing Livingstone's coffin attended by his faithful African servant Jacob Wainwright, is expected to sell for £600/900 as part of Sworders' Out of the Ordinary sale in Stansted Mountfitchet on August 19.

Jacob Wainwright (circa 1859-1892) lived a brief but extraordinary life. Although historical records are scant, it appears he was born among the Yao people of Lake Malawi (his real name was Yamuza). Kidnapped and sold into the Arab slave trade, he was liberated by British shipping and taken to India for education at the Bombay Church Missionary School. Around the age of 14, he joined Henry Morton Stanley's expedition to find Livingstone and was later hired by Livingstone's party as an attendant.

When Livingstone died in May 1873, Wainwright was one of three Africans who resolved to carry his body from the village of Chitambo near the Bangweulu Swamps to the British consulate in Zanzibar. The grueling, 1,000-mile journey took eight months after which Wainwright — the only English speaker among the three men — was instructed to accompany the coffin back to England on SS *Malwa*. He was the sole black African among the eight pallbearers at Livingstone's funeral conducted in Westminster Abbey, on April 18, 1874. This card, labeled for the London portrait studio Elliot & Fry and signed in ink by Wainwright, dates from this time.

Wainwright later stayed in Suffolk and traveled the country addressing meetings of the Church Missionary Society, before finally making his way back to East Africa. He wrote about his experiences in a diary that has recently been published. It is the only eyewitness account of the death of Livingstone and offers a rare insight into the role of Africans involved in British commercial and colonial expansion.

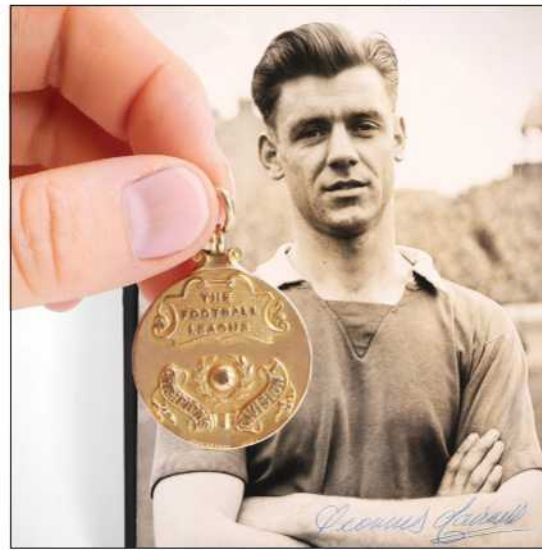
Curated by former Christie's specialist Mark Wilkinson, Sworders' Out of the Ordinary sale is now in its eighth year

(the first took place in February 2018). This ever-changing and eclectic mix of art, antiques, design and collectibles with a "wow factor" is the only place to go to shop for a Nineteenth Century tin military slipper bath shaped as a shoe (£12,000) or an American gold-filled pocket watch engraved for the Wild West showman William "Buffalo Bill" Cody (£24,000).

Carrying the top estimate in the sale is a 1954-55 football league championship winners gold medal inscribed for Chelsea striker Seamus O'Connell (1930-2013). Born in Carlisle to a farming family, O'Connell played in both the Scottish Football League for Queens Park and in the English Football League for Middlesbrough, Chelsea and Carlisle United. He joined Chelsea in August 1954, scoring a hat-trick on his debut against Manchester United, in the club's first title winning season. O'Connell remained with Chelsea for another season before returning to the amateur game playing for Bishop Auckland, also winning four caps for the England amateurs. His 9K gold medal is offered together with a silver medal engraved "Winners 1954-55" and 15 signed photographs of Seamus O'Connell with an estimate of £10/12,000. They were purchased directly from O'Connell before he died in 2013.

Guided at £23,000 is the humerus bone of a dodo — the flightless bird that thrived on the island of Mauritius until the arrival of Dutch settlers in the Seventeenth Century. This bone, from the collection of Errol Fuller, author of *The Dodo: from Extinction to Icon*, is one of a group of dodo bones discovered in 1885 during the investigation of the Mare aux Songes swamp, Mauritius, by schoolmaster George Clarke. Hearing that a few bones had been found in this area, Clarke hired local servants to wade through a swamp and feel for further specimens with their feet.

Taxidermy specimens in the sale include a Fijian-style "mermaid" that purports to be the mummified body of a creature that was half mammal and half fish. Traditionally these were made in Japan for Shinto shrines and temples, although they caused a sensa-



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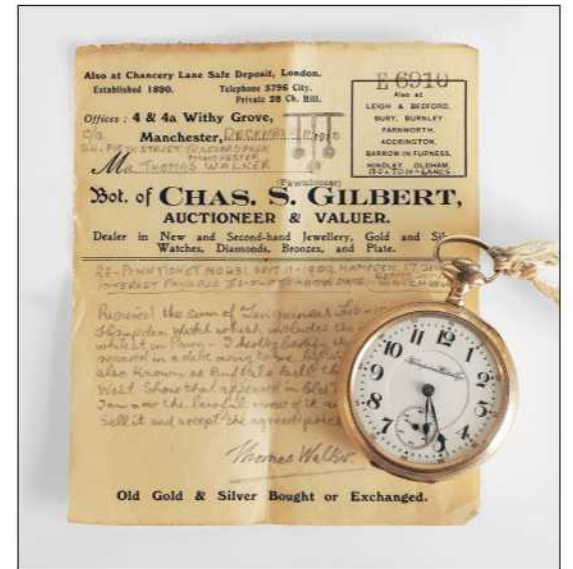
tion when first seen by Westerners. The famous "Feejee Mermaid" exhibited in New York in 1842 became one of master showman PT Barnum's greatest attractions. Similar creations became relatively commonplace at Victorian side shows and freak shows, with most fashioned from papier-mâché, wood and a mix of bird, fish and mammal skeletal parts. This 57-centimeter example, made in the Twentieth Century, was previously exhibited at Moyse's Hall Museum in Bury St Edmunds in the "Strange Wonders and Curiosities" exhibit. It has an estimate of £500/800.

Something completely different is a group of a dozen psychedelic promotional postcards and cards for Bill Graham rock concerts at the Fillmore, San

Francisco. Featuring artists such as The Doors, Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane and designs by Robert Wilson, the designer, one of "The Big Five" San Francisco poster artists, the majority of these cards were posted to Mike Shearman in Pinner, Middle-

sex, following a visit to San Francisco in the late 1960s. Treasured for years, they are now estimated together at £200/400.

Sworders is at Cambridge Road, Stansted CM24 8GE. For additional information, www.sworder.co.uk.



American gold-filled pocket watch engraved for the Wild West showman William "Buffalo Bill" Cody.

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