



## Glitz, glamour and glitches

Some estimates prove wildly out, including for a coronation gift returning from Australia

IT is always sad when the recipient of an award has to part with the memento, even when the proceeds enable the vendor to live a better life. In the case of Lavinia, Duchess of Norfolk (1916–95), it was not a better life for herself, but for others. She was the senior of the four duchesses who held the canopy above The Queen during her anointing at the Coronation.

More importantly, she was the understudy during dress rehearsals, for which the new Queen gratefully wrote 'to express my heartfelt thanks to you for standing in for me in the Abbey in the weeks leading up to my coronation. It was extremely kind of you to be there to support me at such an important moment of one's life, and it gave me such tremendous confidence to know all was ready before the service. The Archbishop was very grateful for all your patient help and Mummy hopes that my understudy will be available when I am next ill in bed!!'

The Duchess received one of seven identical diamond and

platinum ER monogram brooches made by Garrard (**Fig 1**), the others going to the Maids of Honour. The monogram, a facsimile of The Queen's writing, was 'Philip's inspired idea'.

The Duchess had not converted to her husband's Catholicism and one of the charities with which she was associated was the British and Foreign Bible Society, to which she donated the brooch in 1956. She may have wished to do so discreetly, as she sent it via Ray Lindwall, the great Australian fast bowler, who had played against the Duke of Norfolk's XI at Arundel that year. It was in lieu of a donation towards the society's new headquarters in Canberra and it was sold in Australia. Recently, however, it returned to London and Noonans, né Dix Noonan Webb, offered it in mid June with an estimate of \$6,000. In the event, it went to a European collector for £231,840.

On the same day, June 14, Sworders of Stansted Mountfitchet held one of its quarterly 'fine interiors' sales, which,



**Fig 1 left:** A diamond and platinum ER monogram brooch gifted by The Queen. £231,840. **Fig 2 above left:** One of a pair of shop vitrines. £5,200. **Fig 3 above right:** Gothic Revival bookcase. £2,440

despite differences of glitz and scale, had a parallel to the three-session sale held in Paris by Christie's that week. At Sworders, a number of lots came from Paolo Moschino Ltd, as the design business Nicholas Haslam is now called; the Christie's sales were for the secondary collections of that still more eminent designer Hubert de Givenchy (1927–2018) from his Paris and country houses, the Hôtel d'Orrouer and Manoir du Jonchet.

One might expect designers' pieces to be highly polished, sometimes soullessly so, and there was certainly much gloss in Paris. It was a relief to learn that a Moschino lot was characterised by 'knocks, scratches and wear throughout. Some fading, discolouration and marks. Tarnish and discolouration to metalware. A little bit of wobble in joints, but generally sturdy. Later wax polish. Doors functional. No key present. General wear commensurate with age and use'. That was a 19th-century Gothic Revival oak open bookcase in the manner of Charles

Bevan (**Fig 3**), which sold for £2,440. A pair of late-19th-century shop vitrines, rather charming in worn green paint, reached £5,200 (**Fig 2**).

The most expensive lot at Sworders, however, was not from the designer, but Longford Castle, the Wiltshire seat of the Pleydell-Bouveries, Earls of Radnor. The pair of George II gilt gesso pier mirrors with broken swan-neck pediments (**Fig 7**) was probably from the 'two suites of fine 18th century gilded and upholstered furniture' supplied by Benjamin Goodison to Sir Jacob Bouverie in about 1740. There was a gravitas to these mirrors, helped by the mercury glass, and they sold for £36,400.

There were many startling discrepancies between estimate and price in Paris, such as a part set of about 90 assorted turn-of-the-20th-century Bohemian table glasses estimated to €3,000 and sold for €126,000 (\$108,000). The most expensive lot was another—estimate €250,000, price €2.442 million (\$2.1 million)—for two busts, probably of the Emperors



Hadrian and Commodus (**Fig 4**). They were in coloured marbles and made in late-17th- or early-18th-century Rome. They were on modern marbled wooden columns and had been purchased by Givenchy from the supremely elegant Parisian Galerie Kugel.

Theatre, indeed tragedy, was represented by eight volumes of engravings of Versailles (**Fig 5**) given by Louis XVI in 1788 to the comte de Montmorin, who was butchered in the prison massacres of 1792. His handsomely bound present, estimated to €60,000, made €403,200 (£346,000).

A 48in by 67½in portrait of Charles Wyndham's Hound (**Fig 6**) attributed to the Stubbs follower John Boulton (1753–1812) sold for €100,800 (£86,000) against an estimate of €30,000. Wyndham was a member of the family of the Earls of Dunraven and this came from their 1982 sale at Adare, Co Limerick. ↗

### Next week Fair favourites



**Fig 4 above left:** Marble busts, thought to be of Roman Emperors Hadrian and Commodus. £2.442 million  
**Fig 5 left:** Eight bound volumes of engravings of Versailles. €403,200



**Fig 6:** Portrait of Charles Wyndham's Hound by Boulton. €100,800



**Fig 7:** A pair of George II gilt gesso pier mirrors, with mercury glass, probably supplied to Sir Jacob Bouverie in 1740. £36,400

### Pick of the week

Seven years ago, Megan Piper, a contemporary art dealer, and the late regeneration expert Clive Dutton founded The Line, a series of monumental sculptures loaned by leading dealers and placed along East London waterways, roughly on the meridian north from the Greenwich peninsula. Currently, there are 18, together with several permanently sited works by Antony Gormley and others.



The Line was launched after a crowdfunding campaign and has been a great success in its aim of improving the quality of cultural life in an area where there was little.

I don't know whether the idea for the Mayfair Sculpture Trail was in part inspired by The Line's success, but it is now having its third edition (until July 31) in collaboration with Art in Mayfair. It is a similar mix of impermanent and permanent installations, the former providing an opportunity for potential purchasers to see works unconfined by galleries. Many of the permanent sculptures will be familiar, but I am shocked that I had never really noticed the screen on the Time and Life building, 153 New Bond Street, W1, let alone realised that it is by Henry Moore.

(NB: The caption for the Heath Robinson drawing from the Chris Beetles exhibition in the June 22 Pick of the Week was: 'Monte Carlo Reformed: Playing Snap for Filberts at the Casino'.)