



AUCTION DETAILS

Better by Design:
The Principal Contents
of Boden Hall takes place
 on Tuesday, March 4 at
 Sworders Fine
 Art Auctioneers,
 Cambridge Road,
 Stansted Mountfitchet
 CM24 8GE
Live bidding at
sworder.co.uk

Boden Hall, Cheshire – its unique collection will be sold at auction next month

History under the hammer

The fascinating contents of Boden Hall will be auctioned next month

Historically important period furniture, objects and fine paintings from Georgian mansion Boden Hall, near Rode Heath, are being sold at auction.

The eclectic collection was curated by the hall's most recent custodians, Victoria Wrather and her late husband, William.

William Wrather, a Manchester surveyor and developer, and Victoria, a decorator and interior designer, bought the estate 27 years ago. Together, they embarked on a major restoration project that returned the house, garden and outbuildings to their former glory, as well as restoring the swimming pool, tennis court, kennels and Victorian glasshouse. The hall was home to the H & R Johnson family of tile manufacturers from Stoke-on-Trent between 1919 and 1997.

Victoria collected teapots (finishing with close to 400), while William had a love for walking sticks, corkscrews, vintage cars and vintage bicycles. They bought together and built friendships with the dealers and collectors who shared their singular passions.

The lots that feature in the sale, conducted by Sworders Fine Art Auctioneers, exemplify

the Wrathers' knowledge and love of period architecture and their admiration for the work of renowned 20th-century British decorator and antiques dealer Geoffrey Bennison (1921-84) – master of the 'layered' look.

Although Victoria had semi-retired as an interior decorator, she took on Boden Hall as another challenge, engaging the services of her curtain makers, carpet fitters, upholsterers, kitchen and bathroom fitters and tilers, and alerted the antiques trade to the pieces she was looking to buy for the property – in particular, Cheshire dealers Michael Wiseshall and David Bedale, buying many items from both over the years.

Complementing the original panelled pine window shutters and marble fireplaces, the selection of fine furniture includes pieces such as a 19th-century painted carved wood and marble console table, estimated at £2,000-4,000, and a pair of William IV gothic revival oak card tables, pitched at £3,000-5,000.

The Irish furniture in the sale, including an extraordinary mahogany sarcophagus form peat chest (£2,000-3,000), was mostly

bought from Michael Wiseshall, who lived in both Knutsford and Dublin.

The Georgian grandeur at Boden Hall was softened with the addition of pictures from the Modern British canon and the occasional note of playfulness. The sale will include conversation pieces as varied as a Michelin compressor with its Bibendum man (estimate £300-500) and a Second World War airman's sheepskin flying jacket and trousers (estimate £200-300), combined with the important paintings that provide the sale with its headline lots.

William became interested in buying art through a picture dealer who worked from one of his properties in Manchester. In addition to many good 18th- and 19th-century pictures, he acquired several works by top-drawer 20th century painters. These include a double portrait of the artist's wife, Hazel, and his daughter, Eileen, by Sir John Lavery (estimate £180,000-250,000).

Following the recent sale of Boden Hall, Victoria Wrather has moved to a smaller property. She says it is time for another family to enjoy Boden and all it has to offer. ●