

ANTIQUES TODAY



News from the South African
Antique Dealers' Association

■ MAY 2008

without a past, we have no future



Antony Wiley

The role of dealers in the Art and Antique world is an important one. There are those who begrudge the dealer the profit they make. Without good dealers who know their subject well and also know what customers want, the collecting world would not be as strong and vibrant as is.

The Late Guy Nicholson who died earlier this year was not really a collector but he had over the years built up an interesting collection of South African painting, furniture, silver and other items. I knew the collection well as I had valued it a number of times over the years. After his death, auctioneers were given the job of disposing of it in April this year. His closest relative was a sister who came out from England to help empty the house of its contents. Households always include pieces, which because they are used so regularly, are often overlooked as being of great value. In this case various items were dropped off with the auctioneers after the bulk of the contents has been collected by the auction house. These items were added to the catalogue at the beginning of the auction. They included a circular silver covered box with a hinged lid with a coat-of-arms on it. There being little time to do further research the item was described as continental silver and estimated to sell between R600 and R800 Rand. It attracted a good deal of attention during the viewing prior to the auction, at the viewing and on the internet. This is where it was picked up by a number of

European dealers. When the day of the auction arrived which was 1st April and those attending the auction thought it was an Aprils fools joke, when after keen bidding it was knocked down to its new owner for R170,500!! Well it was not a joke the box had been bought by Jeremy Astfalck of the Old Corkscrew in Franschoek in the Cape. Jeremy is a member of the South African Antiques Dealers Association and he exhibits every month at the Nelson Mandela Square Antiques Fair. He is today South Africa's foremost silver dealer and has built up a huge knowledge and enthusiasm for silver.

Continued overleaf...



Silver Sugar Box, London, 1662
Available at The Old Corkscrew - Cape Town



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Because of his endless study he recognised the box for what it was as soon as he saw it. It is a silver sugar box made at the time of Charles II in England, and he now knows it was made in London in 1662.. The maker he says is either Humphrey Bates or Hugh Bollen. Astfalck says he can find records of two earlier examples one made in 1650 and the other in 1661, the latter example sold at Sotheby's in London in 1996 for 19,000 pounds sterling.

He is currently finding out whose coat-of-arms are on the box and once he knows who it was made for this could add to the value of piece.

In the 17th Century sugar was a scarce commodity so it was kept in a box made of silver, likewise tea was kept in a caddy because it to was also a valuable commodity. Later, sets of these matching caddies were made, and today these are particularly sought after by collectors.

This once again shows that there are still important and interesting antiques from all periods to be found in the country. You must however know what you are looking for and what your looking at when you see it, as Astfalck did in this case. Is the box going to be for sale? He says it is but it seems unlikely that it will find a buyer locally because it is extremely specialised – it will probably find a home in a museum.

When he saw the box on the auction, and doing further research, realised what it was, he also realised he would have to put his money where his mouth was. This obviously he did and I am sure he

was hoping at the time that noone else would pick up how important it was, but obviously others did and this was reflected in the price he had to pay for it. It takes courage to outlay large amounts of money on a single item like this which you may not sell in a short time.

All round everyone was happy with the result, the estate, Astfalck and the auctioneers and one is certain that the new owner whoever they turn out to be will also be extremely happy to.

How the box came to South Africa and into the Nicholson collection we will sadly never know. Nicholson probably never knew about this remarkable box but I am certain it still gave him immense pleasure throughout his life.

Finally, never disregard what you may feel to be an every day items in your home as they might just be of great value. Also remember that South African Antique Dealers Association do offer value for money when you buy from them. They must always guarantee the pieces they sell.

A.W.

Victorian Copper Jelly Moulds
Available at The Old Corkscrew
"Rooms on View" - Johannesburg



Charles II Longcase Clock, circa 1680
Available at Tim Curtis Antiques - Cape Town

FORTHCOMING lectures

on antique English furniture and silver

Sandra Goldberg of Heirlooms is running the lectures covering:

- Materials and techniques • Politico-social and economic influences of the day • Stylistic and fashion trends • Aids in determining age and value

Dates: Furniture: August 6, 13, 20, 27 / September 3, 10

Silver: August 7, 14, 21, 28 **Time:** 9.30 am - 12.30 or 6 pm - 9 pm

Cost: R2100 for 6 lectures on furniture

R1 400 for 4 lectures on silver R3 200 for 10 lectures

Cash or cheque only. 50% deposit 10 days prior to commencement.

Contact to register: (011) 268 0093 or 082 670 5870

or email: heirlooms@mweb.co.za

UPCOMING events

ROOMS ON VIEW

Sandton Convention Centre

29 May - 1 June 2008

NATIONAL & DECORATIVE ARTS FAIR

Sandton Convention Centre

17 July - 20 July 2008

SAADA ANNUAL FAIR

Wanderers Clubhouse

2 Oct - 5 Oct 2008